Miscellaneous Series - II

HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN AFGHANISTAN

भोट विद्या संरक्षणम्

PROF. C.S. UPASAK
M.A. PH.D. (LONDON)
EX-DIRECTOR, NAVA-NALANDA-MAHAVIHARA

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF HIGHER TIBETAN STUDIES
SARNATH VARANASI

B.E. 2534 C.E. 1990

HISTORY OF BUDDHISM
IN
AFGHANISTAN

In
Memory of My Parents

Late Smt. Muna Devi
&
Late Sri Bindeshwari Singh

Miscellaneous Series - II

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Publisher's Note

Afghanistan, comprising a part of Gandhāra in ancient India and eastern Iran, was once a land of Buddhism. The large number of Buddhist stupas and monasteries which one finds today scattered all over the country are reminiscent of ancient glory of Buddhism. These are now laid bare by the recent archaeological explorations by the foreign scholars.

Professor C.S. Upasak, formerly Director of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihāra, Nalanda, with a substantive grant of Fellowship offered by the Indian Council of Historical Research toured various Buddhist ancient sites in different structures. The Afghanistan tour greatly inspired Professor Upasak and he made an exploratory survey of these ancient Buddhist sites. He also collected lot of evidence from Buddhist literature canonical and post-canonical to make his study wider and more realistic. Further he has made use of studies made by French and German missions. The result of author's exploratory studies has now been presented in the present comprehensive treatise entitled *"History of Buddhism in Afghanistan"*. This is perhaps the first systematic work on the history of Buddhism in Afghanistan which was once a very influential region in the Central Asia in the past with which the ancient Tibet had very close socio-cultural interaction.

In the process of publication of the present work there were some difficulties due to the computer setting, printing process, especially due to non-availability of diacritical marks. In spite of all these problems, the book has been published in a decent format. The present work provides new information on the subject and throws a fresh light on the history of religion of Sākyamuni in ancient Afghanistan which I am sure will be found useful to both the general readers and the specialists.

I am beholden to all those organizations and individual scholars who helped professor Upasak in his efforts to work on this laudable project. I take this opportunity to express my sincerest joy and hope that the work will benefit a larger world of scholarship.

S.Rinpoche
Director

Sarnath
Date: 8th June, 1990

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PREFACE

Afghanistan is world famous for its two colossal images of the Buddha, one is 55 mtrs. in height, the largest in the world and the other 35 mtrs. If we make survey of the history of Buddhism in Afghanistan, it is indeed thought provoking that Buddhism arrived in this country very early, even when the Tathāgata was alive. Tapassu and Bhallika, the First Lay-devotees of the Buddha, who hailed from Balhīka or modern Balkh, a town in Afghanistan, were the first persons to carry the 'message' of the Buddha in this country. Bhallika is said to have become a monk at Rājagaha. He is the first Buddhist monk of Afghanistan who stayed at Balkh in a monastery erected for him. This was the first Buddhist monastery in Afghanistan built at Balkh. Later, the Mahāsāṅghikas, a branch of the Early Theravāda School of Buddhism, also established their strongholds in Udyāna, the easternmost part of Afghanistan, some one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha. The Mahāsāṅghika group of monks were the first to proselytize Afghanistan in a missionary way. About a century later, during the time of Aśoka, Early Theravāda Buddhism was propagated by a missionary led by Thera Mahārakkhita. Buddhism, thus, took a firm root in this great land and continued as the faith of the people for several centuries, probably not less a period than in India, the home of Buddhism.

I was fascinated to make a study of the history of Buddhism in Afghanistan when I got a chance to visit this great land of Buddhism in 1976 to make a study of the architecture of the ancient Buddhist monasteries, for which I was granted an assistance by the Indian Council of Historical Research. I spent about three months touring all through the country, visiting a number of ancient Buddhist sites, some situated in the interior villages, miles away from the road, which could be visited only by foot. Soon after my return from there I submitted a detailed study to I.C.H.R., which has yet to be published. My first preliminary study of the monasteries of Afghanistan inspired me to take up a work on Buddhism in Afghanistan of full length. It again has been possible by receiving a Fellowship from the Indian Council of Historical Research the present work is the outcome of this grant. I deeply owe to I.C.H.R.

This work took me more than three and a half years to complete. In the beginning it appeared as if I am groaning in dark as no written material of any kind is available in any language particularly on the history of Buddhism of this country, except some scanty and stray travellers' accounts, mostly Chinese. Long ago in 1938, Father Heras wrote an article on the 'Spread of Buddhism in Afghanistan' in the Journal of University of Bombay (Vol. IV, part-4), although this article is extremely short and preliminary, it however presented a guide-line to begin with the study. In course of my study I had to make several attempts to peep and hunt for materials scattered in numerous epigraphs, antiquities, reports and journals and books on archaeology. I studied with great interest the Reports of Delegation de la Franchise Archaeologique in Afghanistan (*DAFA*) and the Reports of the Kyoto University Archaeological Team in Afghanistan, besides some essays written by treasure hunters like Charles Masson and some preliminary descriptions of Buddhist sites by William Simpson in early 20th century. These of course proved of great value in reconstructing the history of Buddhism in this country.

We have planned the present work in tracing the history of Buddhism region-wise because of the fact the present political entity of Afghanistan was not known to the Buddhist world rather known only by separate names of states which it formed in ancient times. We have started with a brief resume of the land and people of the country which follows with the introduction of Buddhism in Afghanistan. Thereafter the eastern part, Jalalabad and its surrounding areas are dealt with. Our study includes Kabul, Begram, Bamiyan, Kandahar, Ghazni, Haibak and Balkh and Fondukistan. We have endeavoured to take up almost all the known sites of Buddhist importance and have tried to show the Buddhist cultural activities that took place there. Since we have taken the study of individual sites, sometimes many common episodes and facts have to be repeated for one context or the other. In the end we have given a select bibliography, which we believe may be of some use to those who make further study in this field.

I have received helps from several individuals, scholars and institutions in manifold ways. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the Indian Council of Historical Research, whose first benevolent grant made me possible to visit Afghanistan for the study of ancient monasteries and thereafter by providing me a Research Fellowship to compile this work. I am indebted to I.C.H.R., particularly to Professor Lokesh Chandra, the then Chairman, for his constant encouragement and support. On several occasions he gave me very valuable suggestions, which indeed enriched my study. I also take the opportunity to express my thanks to Dr. B.R. Grover, former Director, ICHR, Dr. B.K. Pandey, Senior Research Officer, Dr. B.Ram and Dr. P.K. Shukla, Research Officers of ICHR for their kind help and favour. I am also thankful to Professor Irfan Habid, the present Chairman of ICHR for his kind help and favour; particularly for arranging my another trip to Afghanistan recently.

I was fortunate to get materials from the rich Library of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi. As a matter of fact the entire work was prepared by sitting in this Library. My thanks are due to its Librarian Mr. J.S. Yadav, Mr. O.N. Pandey, Assistant Librarian and Sri Binda Prasad, the Book-holder. I am also thankful to Mr. V.R.Nambiar, Associate Director (Adm.) of this

Institute for allowing me to use the Library and to make me available some photographs and xeroxed copies of some figures. I also deem it a great privilege to come in contact with Mr. Krishna Deva, Associate Director (Research) of this very Institute, who has been so very kind to guide me on several occasions in preparing this work. I owe to him much. I also take the opportunity to thank Dr. M.A. Dhaky, Associate Director (Research) of this Institute for his many valuable suggestions. Late Professor Jagannath Upadhyaya of Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi and Ven. S. Rinpoche, Director of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi were kind enough to help me in many ways. I sincerely thank them. I also got some help from the Library of Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi. My thanks are due to its Librarian and other members who helped me in one way or the other. I also express my thanks to Mr. Samten Chhosphel of Publication Unit and Mr. Pasang Thackchoe of the Library of Tibetan Institute who did so much to get the entire work printed so nicely.

I also take the opportunity to acknowledge with profound regards to all those scholars whose works and articles I utilised in preparing this work. My thanks are also due to Mr. R.K. Singh, Mr. Tribhuvan Kushwaha, Mr. Mevalal Gupta who have been so kind to help me.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to the authorities of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi for publishing this book in the best possible manner.

Ist January, 1989.
Chiraigaon, Varanasi

C.S. UPASAK
Ex-Director
(Nava Nalanda Mahavihara)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGI :	Ancient Geography of India, by A. Cunningham.
ASI :	Archaeological Survey of India.
ASI-AR :	Archaeological Survey of India - Annual Report.
BSOAS :	Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies.
CII :	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
DEBMT :	Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms, by C.S. Upasak.
DPPN :	Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, by G.P. Malalasekera.
E.I. :	Epigraphia Indica.
HPGA:	Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan by Ludvig W. Adamec.
I.A. :	Indian Antiquary.
J.A. :	Journal of Asiatique.
JASB :	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal.
JRAS - N.S.:	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society - New Series.
MDAFA :	Memoir of Delegation Archaeologique de Franchise en Afghanistan.
MASI :	Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India.
PTS :	Pali Text Society.

1

LAND AND PEOPLE

Afghanistan is one of the most ancient countries of the world, known to Indian Greek and Chinese literatures for a long time. But, the present country known as 'Afghanistan' has borne the name only from the middle of 18th century when Afghan race (one of the many, like Taziks, Turks, Mongols Indo-Aryans, Uzbek, Hazara etc.) could become successful in establishing its rule over the present land. The name of 'Afghan' race appears first in literature by Alberuni (973-1084).[1] Previously its various divisions bore independently different names. Indian literatures know the eastern part by 'Udyāna' or 'Oddiyana'· mid-centre as 'Kapiśa' and northwestern region as Balhika. Being a good many Greek settlements in Afghanistan since the time of Alexander the Great, it is also mentioned as Yona-raṭṭha or the country of the Yonas or Greeks. The Achaeminid epigraphical records speak about the extension of the empire of Darius I (521-486 B.C.) in Afghanistan, as in the lists of Satrapies, known from the inscriptions at Behistun, Darius' palace at Persepolis and on his tomb nearby Naqsh-i-Rustam - all in modern Iran. The eastern territory of Achaemininid empire included modern Afghanistan, divided into the following six Satrapies: (1) Aria modern Herat; (2) Bactria modern Balkh; (3) Drangiana, the steppe land of the lower Helmand river or modern Seistan; (4) Arachosia, modern Farrah & Kandahar· (5) Sattagyudia, modern central Afghanistan including Kabul, Bamiyan and the valley of the Panjshir or Begram and (6) Gandhara, the area of Jalalabad and Peshawar and Taxila in Pakistan. The Greek historians knew this land by its several provinces, such as, Bactria, Aria, Arachosia, Gadrosia, Paraopamisade and Gandhāra.

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[1] Sachau, E.C.: *Alberuni's India* (1968), Vol.I, p.208.

At present the country of Afghanistan consists of a territory of irregular shape and of undulated plateau and mountains lying between 29° N 38° N `Latitude and 61° E and 72° E Longitude and extends to 965 Kms. from east to west. It has also been called the 'Cross Roads' of Asia which stretches at the heart of Eurasia, on the rimland of south-east Asia, within the vast belt of the Steppe and semi-deserts that lay from Mediterranean to China. It is bounded on the south and east by the Indian Sub-continent, on the west by the deserts and plateaus of Iran, and on the north by the basins of the Oxus (Amu Dariya) and Jaxartes (Sir Dariya). Its boundaries touch Pakistan in the east and south; USSR in the north-east and little with China in the north-east and in the south-west with Iran. Its total area of coverage is 6,57,500 kms.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

Mountains

Afghanistan is primarily a mountainous country consisting of three successive ranges of precipitous mountains, the dominant being the Hindu -Kush; and its two westward extensions called Koh-i-Baba and Koh-i-Safed. The highest peak of the Hindu-Kush is 4270 Mtr. above the sea level in central Afghanistan. There are a number of passes over the mountains, two most important are the Shabar and Salang, which are perpetually covered with snow at the top. As the ranges of the Hindu-Kush get slope from Kabul in the north-east towards the south-west, there exist several broad mountain valleys, notably, the Kabul valley, the Panjshir valley, the Ghorband valley, the Bamiyan valley, the Foladi valley and the Jalalabad valley - which have long been the important inhabited areas. Religion and culture of the country have flourished in these valleys.

Plains and Lowlands

Besides the mountains there are plains and lowlands in the north and west and south in the country. In the north, the Balkh-area is an extensive plain stretching along the foot of the Hindu-Kush or the Koh-i-Chungur hills to the Oxus. It is less sandy and fertile and warm. The Herat-Farrah lowlands in the south-west are in continuation of the Iranian plateau, with low hills and broad basins and valleys but poor in vegetation. In the east, the Jalalabad valley has some vegetation particularly at places in plains and lowlands. The Seistan basin in the north-west lies 520 Mtr. above the sea level and is an area of brackish marshes and fluctuating lakes.

Deserts

An extensive desert known as Margo or Dast-i-Margo between the Helmand and Khash rivers, lies in the south-western Afghanistan in Farrah district. It is practically impassable being almost a waterless tract of 150 miles in length and 80 or 90 miles in width. The other desert called *'Registān'* or the 'country of sand' stretches eastward from Seistan and Persian frontier, a vast expanse of ridges and hillocks of loose red-sand on either sides of the Helmand to the south-west of Kandahar. The temperature varies considerably, cold in the nights and in day-time it reaches 45° C. or above. In some places, particularly in the north, there is little sand with vast expanse of black pebbles. These deserts are devoid of any natural vegetation and offer no food for men or beasts.

Pamirs and Valleys

Besides the deserts and mountains, beyond the Hindu-Kush in the north, lie the plains of Balkh and Turkistan, occupying a considerable area, quite dry and partly sandy. At places of water or rivers vegetation grows. The climate is warm and dry.

In south Afghanistan the extensive flat plateau covers a vast area and is plain with stones and partly sandy and at places hills spur. Little vegetation is available and only wild bushes grow which provide fodder for the camels.

The valleys which are watered by the rivers or streams have been inhabited from ancient days. The main river valleys are five: namely, East Hazara valley, Kabul valley, Bamiyan valley, Panjshir valley and Jalalabad valley, watered by the Kabul river. Although rocky, vegetation is grown at places where land is less rocky and water is available. In the east of Hazara district there lies the belt of Kabulistan, watered by the Kabul river where a good vegetation exists. The southern and western parts of Afghanistan and the extension of Iranian plateau are dry and sandy and cover almost one-fourth of the country. The Helmand river divides this area into desert and semi-desert.

Rivers and Rivulets

The major rivers of Afghanistan are four or five, namely: Amu or Oxus (ancient Vaṅkṣu), Hari Rud, Helmand-Arghandab and Kabul (ancient Kubhā). Of these, the three are entirely inland, while the Kabul joins the Indus and thus has an outlet to the Arabian sea.

The Āmu or Oxus rises from the Pamir and flows to a distance of about 1100 kms. in Afghanistan. It forms the border with USSR. There are two main tributaries of this vast river, the Kokcha from the central mountains and the Kunduz, named variously at different places, such as Bamiyan Rud, Surkhab,Andarab, Khanabad, Kamrud and Saigan and runs about 480 kms. There are several small rivers which die out in the Karakurram sand before they actually join the Amu Dariya. They include the Tash Qurghan, the Balkh-Ab, the Sar-i-pul, the Ab-i-Kaiser and the Maimana Rud.

The Hari Rud rises from the Hindu-Kush and runs in Afghanistan for about 650 kms. There are two tributaries; and they are Kao Rud and Murghab. The Murghab springs up in the western Hindu-kush and provides good vegetation and fertility to the valley.

The Helmand runs about 1300 kms. in the country which rises from southern watershed of Koh-i-Baba and empties in Iranian Seistan. The tributaries of this river are Kaj Rud, Tirin and Rud-i-Musa Qala. The other major river that joins the Helmand is Arghandab which flows to about 560 kms. There are some tributaries of this river such as Kushk-i-Nakhud, Garam-Ab, which actually feed it and make it expanse.

The Kabul river is known to ancient Indian Literature as Kubha, which runs 330 kms. in Afghanistan and joins the Indus near Peshawar in Pakistan. It rises in the eastern part of the Hindu-Kush at Sher Chashma near Unai pass and passes through Kabul and Jalalabad valleys before meeting the Indus. The current of the river goes stronger and stronger as it approaches the Indus. In Jalalabad it is very swift and difficult to ferry unless suspended by the thick iron ropes tied with the poles on the either sides of the river: The main tributaries of the Kabul river are the Panjshir, the Alishang, the Alingar, the Surkh-Ab, the Logar and the Kunar.

Climate

Varieties in climate is the common feature of Afghanistan. It fluctuates considerably from place to place. The hilly and upland regions are usually very cold during winter and when it snows, the temperature goes below the freezing point. On plains also frost and severe chill are experienced. The summer season is usually pleasant in uplands but dry and hot in the plains where the temperature goes to 45° C. or above. The nights are cold and pleasant during the summer. Rains come in winter from October to April, scanty on plains and meagre in deserts· but mountainous parts record comparatively higher falls more than double that of the plains on average.

People

Afghanistan is a country where people of diverse ethnic groups live; and they speak different groups of languages and follow various types of occupations, some are sedentary agriculturists while others are nomads or semi-nomads living in tents and tending herds, mostly sheep and goat, some rear camels and horses. The country is gifted with wide pasture lands and fine grazing grounds which have made Afghanistan as an excellent habitat for these animals. Sheep are the mainly reared animals on commercial basis in areas like Maimana, Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh, Karaikuli, Katghar for the purpose of woollen industry. Camels are mainly tended in Ghazni and Kandahar and semi-desert areas of the Helmand in the south. Horses are domesticated throughout Afghanistan as they are the main dependable means of transport in hilly areas as well as in plains, like the camels in deserts.

Nomads

Animal husbandry has been adopted as the means of subsistence by a large number of people of Afghanistan since long in the past; and nomadism has been in practice by the people since then. There are some groups of nomads who purely depend upon herding while some combine seasonal nomadism with the cultivation of crops. Those groups as nomads who purely depend on herding, often move over very long distances and migrate upto thousand miles or so, while some traverse shorter distances. Some nomads are primarily traders, but they also keep herds. They carry goods from Pakistan and neighbouring countries and do their business in eastern Afghanistan. Different nomadic groups use a great variety of tents, some made of woven wool, others from hides; some are stretched over wooden supports, others use rough stone walls and timber also.

The sedentary population in Afghanistan also varies in their types, some live in caves while others possess large houses built of dried bricks or stones with big apartments and rooms and courtyards.

The houses of rich people have big boundary walls and at some places; they are called 'Qala'.

Ethnic Groups

The population of Afghanistan is about two crores and density per km. being only twenty eight. Kabul and Jalalabad areas are the densest while the deserts in Seistan and southern parts are the lowest; showing that the areas with fertile lands are of the thickest population. Agriculture is the major means of subsistence there. Majority of population follows Islam (93%), both Sunnis and Shias; others include Sikhs(mostly in Jalalabad and Kabul), Christians, Jews or Parsees and a small community of Hindus (mostly in Kandahar). The anthropological divisions of population include mainly three types of races, although mixed to a great extent. These are: (1) Mediterranean sub-stock of Caucasoid stock; (2) Mangolian stock; (3) Vedic-Austroloid stock. The ethnic distribution of the population includes many tribes which belong to one or the other stock. They are enumerated as : Afghans, Tajik, Baluchi, Hazara, Jamashedi, Firuzkuhi, Taimuri, Nuristani, Uzbek, Turkoman, Kirghizi, Karekalpak and Arab.[1]

Languages

Either Pashto or Dari are spoken throughout the country. Some speak Persian or Arabic. These languages belong to the Indo-Aryan group of languages. There are however two other languages spoken by the people which belong entirely to different groups. These are Brāhuī and Turkik. While Brāhuī is a language of Dravidian family of South Indian group of languages, Turkik descends from Uralic-Altic or Semetic group. A number of sub-groupings of Indo-European or Indo-Iranian languages, such as, Pareshi, Munji and Sanghachi-Eshkashimi are also spoken by the people of Afghanistan, not outside its boundaries.[2]

Political Divisions

We have referred to above in the beginning that the country got its present name as Afghanistan only in the middle of 18th century A.D. when Ahamad Shah carved out it from the previous conquests of Nadir

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[1] Adamec, L. W. : *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.3, p.4 ,Vol.4. p.12, Vol.5, p. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol.3, p.4; Vol.5, p.7; *The Kabul Times Annual*, 1970, pp.122-124

Shah and called it 'Durrani Empire'. In 7th century A.D. when Hiuen-tsiang visited this country, he mentions as many as eleven States of this country. The States mentioned by him are: (1) Baghlan (*Fo-kia-lang*), (2) Khulm (*Ho-lin*), (3) Balkh (*Po-ho*), (4) Jumedh (?) (*Jui-mo-to*), (5)Juzgan (*Hu-shin-kien*), (6) Kachi or Gaz (*Kie-chi*), (7) Bamiyan (*Fan-yen-na*), (8) Kapiśa (*kai-pi-shi*), (9) Laghman (*Lam-po*), (10) Nagarahāra (*Na-kie-lo-ho*) and (11) Uḍyana (*U-chan*). Fa-hsien visited only the eastern part of the Afghanistan earlier than Hiuen-tsiang and he has mentioned only Uḍyāna and Nagarahāra (*Ne-kia*).

Present Divisions

The present political divisions of Afghanistan comprise of twenty six provinces. These are: 1. Badakshan, 2. Takhar, 3. Kunduz, 4. Baghlan, 5. Farrah, 6. Nimruz, 7. Helmand, 8. Herat, 9. Badghis, 10. Ghor, 11. Faryab, 12. Jawzjan, 13. Balkh (or Mazar-i-Sharif), 14. Samngan (or Haibak),15. Bamiyan, 16. Parwan (or Kapiśa), 17. Laghman, 18.Maydan (or Wardak), 19. Kabul, 20. Ningarahar, 21.Logar, 22. Paktya, 23. Ghazni, 24. Urozgan, 25. Zabul and 26. Kandahar.

The administrative capital of the country is Kabul since the days of the Hindu Shahis in the 10th century A.D. The other important towns of the country are Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh, Haibak or Samangan, Kunduz, Pul-i-Khumri, Maimana, Akcha, Shibarghan and Andhkhui, all in north and north central part; in south the main towns are Ghazni, Kandahar and Farrah; and in the north-western region, Herat is the only major town. In the eastern part, the major towns are Charikar, Kabul and Jalalabad. Bamiyan is a small bazar with numerous hotels and resting places or motels. Afghanistan is devoid of any railway system and so one has to depend on motor vehicles or indigenous means for transportation. People on the whole are extremely hospitable, amiable and mixing.

2

INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM IN AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is full of Buddhist monuments all through its length and breadth, right from Jalalabad in the east to Balkh in the north-west and Kandahar in the south. Bamiyan is world famous for the two colossal images of the Buddha, one being 55 metres and the other 35 metres in height. Bamiyan is also well-known for its rock-cut Buddhist caves which number more than twenty thousand although they have never been accurately counted, which stand as a testimony of its being one of the largest centres of Buddhism in the past. Jalalabad and Hadda are renowned for their Buddhist stupas and the icons of Gandhara art; Kapisa was one of the capitals of the Great Kuṣaṇa king Kaniṣka, where ruins of his palace have been excavated besides a number of stūpas and monastic establishments at Shotorak *(Sthaviraka)* and Paitawan*(Pattārāma)* have been found. As many as five epigraphs of Aśoka have been discovered from Afghanistan of which the Graeco-Aramaic edict of Kandahar is well-preserved and complete. The rock-cut monolith stupa of Haibak (Samangan =*Sama - ṇagama)* is unique in the world which has been hewn out of a solid rock along with its *Pradakṣiṇapatha.* All these monuments and ancient Buddhist temples, rock-cut monasteries and stupas although all in ruinous state, testify to the fact that Afghanistan was once a great land of Buddhism in the past.

Afghanistan has been called the cross-road' of Asia and so this country witnessed numerous political and cultural upheavels in the past. It has been the meeting place of different cultures that flourished at its eastern border in India and the others that developed in Greece, Persia and Central Asia and even in the Mediterranean world in the West. The ancient monuments and other records found in Pali, Buddhist

Sanskrit, Chinese and Korean literatures all speak about the great Buddhist culture and religion that once flourished in this great country.

Notwithstanding the devastations caused by a number of invasions right from Alexander the Great upto the Huṇas, the country endured its Buddhist cultural heritage that floursihed till the Arabs' attack in 10th century A.D., which, of course, proved fatal to its pristine culture and religion. Buddhism had thus played a very important role in shaping ancient culture and history of the country.

Geographically and to some extent ethnically too, Afghanistan is closer to Indian sub-continent than to any other country in the West. The people, both linguistically and ethnically, come under mostly the Aryan group. From the very ancient days, the trade and commerce were continuously carried out between India and Afghanistan for centuries. Traders and touring merchants *(Satthavaha)* have probably been an important factor in establishing a *laison* between the countries that they traversed in connection with their trade and commerce. They not only explored the routes and places fit for trade but also conveyed with them the news of cultural and religious epoch-making events and also political changes that took place in the countries of their tours.

In Pali texts[1] and also in some Buddhist Sanskrit texts[2] we get a story of two touring merchants, namely Tapassu and Bhallika. The Pali *Vinaya-pitaka* informs us that Tapassu (Tapussa) and Bhallika (Bhalluka or Bhalliya) visited the Buddha when he was under the Rājāyatana tree in the eighth week after the Enlightenment.[3] They were then coming from 'Ukkala'. They offered *Madhugoḷaka* (Sweet-ball) to the Buddha. At the end of the meal, the Buddha talked to them and they then requested him to accept them as his Upāsakas or lay-devotees. They then underwent the 'Refuge' of the Buddha and Dharma (not Saṅgha, which was yet to be formed) and thus became the 'First Lay-devotees of the Buddha in the world. The *Aṅguttaranikaya Aṭṭhakatha* (Commentary-1.207), adds further that the Buddha gave them eight handfuls of his hair for worship. They took the hair with them to their city of Asitanjana where they built a Cetiya, from which 'blue light issued on the Uposatha days'. Asitanjaña was the capital of the Kamsa or Kamsabhoga, a division of the Uttarāpatha. According to the *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā*,[4] they are

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1. *Vinayapiṭaka, Mahāvagga* (Nalanda Ed.), p.5-6; *Aṅguttaranikāya* (PTS.p.26, *Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (PTS.),p.207; *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* (PTS.), p..48 ff.; *Jātaka* (PTS.), I.80
2. *Lalitavistara*, p.381 ff.; *Divyāvadāna*, (Mithila) Ch.-XXVII, p.205 *Mahāvastu*, 3, 313.
3. *Mahāvaggapali* (Nal. Ed.), pp.5-6
4. *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* (PTS.), I.48ff. (Nalanda) Vol.-I, pp. 68-70

said to be brothers, Tapassu being the elder; and were the sons of a caravan leader of Pokkharavatī town. It is also mentioned that they visited the Buddha later again at Rājagaha and by hearing his sermon Tapassu became a *Sotāpanna* and Bhallika an *Arhanta* after entering into the Saṅgha.

The *Lalitavistara* (in the XXIV Chapter - Trapassu-Bhallika Parivarta,381.4) narrates that the two brothers Trapussa and Bhallika were the merchants from the 'Uttarāppatha'; and when they passed through Bodha Gaya, they offered honey and cut pieces of sugarcane to the Lord. The *Mahāvastu* also informs that they hailed from the 'Uttarāpatha' and offered to Buddha honey and ghee.[1]

The legend of Tapassu and Bhallika is also referred to by Hiuen-tsiang.[2] He records, "At a distance of above 50 *li* northwest from the capital (Balkha) was *T'i-wei's* city (Tapassu's city) and above 40 *li* north of that was *P'o-li's* city (Bhallika's city). In each of these towns was a tope above thirty feet high. Now the story of these topes was this. As soon as Tathāgata, long ago attained Buddhahood, he went to the Bodhi tree and thence to the Deer Park (near Benaras). At this time the two house-holders meeting him in his majestic glory gave him of their travelling provisions, parched grain and honey......When they had received the religious teaching, they requested the Buddha something to worship; and Tathāgata then gave them his hair and nail (parings).......The merchants accepting Tathāgata's instructions, returned each to his city, and according to the pattern, thus taught by the Buddha, they proceeded to erect these two topes, the very first in the dispensation of Śakyamuni Buddha."[3] The same story is retold in the *Life of Hiuen-tsang,* without change in substance.[4]

Obviously, Tapassu and Bhallika were the touring merchants from the *Uttarāpatha* i.e. from north or northwest India; and they became the lay-followers of the Buddha. And yet if the *Aṭṭhakathā* legend is taken into account, Bhallika became a monk. They constructed two stūpas on the hair and nail-parings of the Buddha at some distance from Balkh which Hiuen-Tsiang himself saw. Hiuen-Tsiang marked the location of the stūpas correctly as it was in the living tradition of the people during his visit. On the phonetic similarity *Bhallika* appears to be a derivative from *Balhika,* the ancient name of Balkh.

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1. *Mahāvastu,* 3.303;Also Cf. *Divyavadana,* p.-393.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the WesternWorld,* I,pp.46-48; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang,* p.-50; Watters T. : *On the Yuan-Chwang's Travels in India,* pp. 111-113.
3. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* pp. 46-48.
4. *Beal S. : Life of Hiuen-Tsiang,* p.-50.

Dr. Lokesh Chandra, based on the Pali *Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā*, has pointed out that *bhallika* is a kind of copper, enumerated under the eight kinds of *piśācalohāni* or metals coming from the Piśacā country. He further suggests that *bhallika* became the name of a metal after the town *Bāhlīka* or Balkh. The city of Asitañjana, where the two merchants constructed the stūpas, was in the Kaṃsa province. *Kaṃsa* is bronze and this metal lent its name to the place of its origin, namely the ancient province of Kaṃsa, in which Balkh was situated.[1]

In all probability, Tapassu and Bhallika were the merchants hailing from Balkh; and the story of their becoming the First Lay-devotees (Upāsakas) of the Buddha appears to be a historical fact. Later Bhallika became a monk and Arhanta as recorded in the *Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā*.[2] Thus, Tapassu and Bhāllīka were the first two persons who carried the 'message' of the Buddha to Bhallika or Balkh, of course not as missionaries, outside India to Afghanistan.[3]

The north-western part of the Indian sub-continent was known to the people of eastern or north-eastern India since long. It is well attested by many sources.[4] Direct link between Taxila and Magadha during the Buddha's time is well warranted by references scattered here and there in the Pali Texts. Jīvaka Komārabhacca, the celebrated physician of Magadha received his training in medical science at Taxila, and many students had gone there from Kāśī and other places when Jīvaka was there.[5]

Uḍḍyāna or Uḍyāna (Mod. Jalalabad), a region close to Gandhāra, was equally known to the people of the eastern India. Hiuen-tisang relates a story of the migration of the Śākyas to Uḍyāna *(U-chang-na)*. According to the tradition, as he records, there lived four tribes of the Śākyas during the time of the Buddha. These were attacked and massacred by Viruddhaka (Pali-Viḍūḍabha), the son and successor of Praśenajit of Kośala in revenge. Some could save their life and fled away for refuge in different countries. One of the Śākya princes, after traversing many countries found his way to Uḍyāna.[6] Later this Śākya prince became the king of this country. He had a son named Uttarasena, who could obtain the relics of the Buddha after his Mahāparinibbāna,

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1. Chandra Lokesh : *Three Iranian Words in the Buddhist Tradition*, p.-7
2. *Aṅguttaranikāya Atthakatha* (PTS), I, 207; Also Cf. *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* (PTS.,) I, 50ff.
3. Cf. *Encyclopeadia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p. 685-687.
4. See: Cunningham A. : *Ancient Geography of India* (1960), p.-44 ff.; Dey N. L. : *Geo. Dict. of Ancient and Med. India*, London (1971), Vol.-I, pp. 60-61, etc.
5. Malalasekera G.P. : *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol.-I, pp. 957, 982-983.
6. Migration of the Śākyas to Ceylon is also mentioned in the *Mahāvaṃsa* - VIII. 18ff.; IX. 6ff.

rather lately. He then enshrined these relics in a stūpa. This stūpa was seen by Hiuen-tsiang.[1] Sir Aurel Stein has tried to identify it by a stūpa in the Swat Valley,[2] which was once a part of Udyāna. Fa-hsian[3] and Hiuen-tsiang[4] both have recorded that Buddha visited this region and gave his sermon there. This tradition of Buddha's visit to Uḍyāna appears more mythological than based on facts and cannot be warranted by any other source whatsoever. But we can however infer that, the 'message' of the Buddha might have reached this part of Afghanistan also when the Buddha was alive. Hiuen-tsiang also believed to have met with the king of Bamiyan who was a descendant of Śākya race who greeted him in his palace.[5] The Śākya king of Uḍyāna probably later moved to Bamiyan and made it his capital. If the settlement of the Śākyas in the Uḍyāna is to be taken as a historical fact, as the circumtances lead us to believe, their immigration to Udyāna should have taken place at a very early time, certainly before the rule of the Mauryas. There appears to be some grain of truth in the migration of the Śākyas from their homeland to other places. It is said that a branch of the Śākyas escaped to the Himalayas where they built a city.[6] And one Pāndu son of Amitodana (brother of Suddhodana) crossed the Ganga and on the other side of the river founded a city. His daughter was married with king Pāndukābhaya of Sri Lanka.[7] The immigration of Śākyas to Uḍyāna, as recorded by Huien-tsiang, cannot therefore be summarily dismissed. Probably the Śākyas, who settled in Udyāna might have carried the 'message of the Buddha alongwith them. It may also be presumed that some Buddhist monks might have reached there either by their own wanderings or depending upon the *Satthavāhas* (Leaders of caravans) to this country who used to take such long tours in course of their trade to the eastern or northern parts of India or with the Śākya prince who established his rule there. That the Buddhist monks who used to travel along with the caravans is known from several Pali Buddhist texts.[8] It is likely that the Buddhist monks might have gone along with the caravans to Afghanistan carrying the 'message' of the Buddha at a very early time. And Uḍyāna (Jalalabad region of

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1. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-133.
2. *Memoirs of A.S.I.*, Vol.42, pp. 303-304. He has identified it with the stūpa of Shankaradara.
3. Giles, H. A. : *The Travels of Fa-Hsien* (1959), p.-11.
4. Beals, S. : *Op. Cit.*, p.-133
5. Watters, T. : *Op. Cit.*, p.-116
6. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.-972.
7. *Mahāvaṃsa*, VIII, vs.18-28; Gieger's trans., pp.63-64.
8. *Dighanikāya*, III, p.-130, 132; *Mahāvagga*, I, 152, 292; *Cullaniddesa*, p.-46; etc.

Afghanistan) was probably the first place in Afghanistan where Buddhism started taking root, besides Balkh. Uḍyāna became an important centre of Buddhism for the skull-relic of the Buddha enshrined near there. It is confirmed by Fa-hsien,[1] Sung-Yun[2] and Hiuen-tsiang[3] who witnessed and worshipped it during their visits. Hiuen-tsiang also mentions the presence of other sacred articles used by the Buddha which were also enshrined in the stūpas. These relics included eye-balls, tooth, bowl, etc. of the Buddha.[4]

That the relics of the Buddha were enshrined in Afghanistan is further proved by the discovery of a jar with a relic and inscription over it at Hadda,[5] and a relic-casket at Wardak.[6] Dauranta (*Pali-Dantarama*) in Jalalabad was probably the place where the tooth-relic of the Buddha was deposited as very name suggests and about which Hiuen-tsiang has mentioned.[7] Besides, we have found numerous Buddhist stupas, rock-cut caves, shrines, temples and innumerable antiquities of early times from Uḍyana (Jalalabad) area. All these antiquities confirm the importance of Uḍyāna country and also that Buddhism reached there at a very early period. This region of Afghanistan was one of the first places to receive the *'Saddharma'* outside India.

Mahasaṅghikas in Uḍyāna

In the Pali Ceylonese Chronicles it is recorded that on the occasion of the Second Buddhist Council that took place at Vesali, one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbana of the Buddha, a branch of the Saṅgha called 'Mahāsaṅ-ghika' separated from the main branch of the Theravāda school of Buddhism on some doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues,[8] formed their own group and got this name for being 'large in number'. The Mahasaṅghikas then migrated from Magadha into two streams; one went towards the South India and the other to the North-West. The group of monks who came to the North-West India was again sub-divided into five: viz. Ekavyavahārika, Kaukulika or Kurullaka, Bahusrutiya, Prajñaptivadin and Lokuttaravadin.[9] In the

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[1] Giles H. A. : *The Travels of Fa-hsien*, p.-15.
[2] Beals S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction p.-CVII.
[3] *Ibid.*, p.-96
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 94-97
[5] *C. I. I.*, Vol. II, pp. 157-158.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 165-170
[7] Beals S. : *Op. Cit.*, p.-92
[8] *Mahāvaṃsa*, V. v-7;*Dipavaṃsa*,V.v-42; *Mahābodhivaṃsa*,p.-69 ff. and others.
[9] Dutta N. : *The Buddhist Sects in India*, p.-60.

Sariputraparipri-cchāśutra (Chinese trans.) it is further mentioned that the Lokuttaravādins resided at Uḍyāna and lived with the Sarvāstivādins, Mahīsāsakas, Dharmaguptas and Kāśyapīyas. The *Mahāvastu*, the *Vinaya* text of the Loku-ttaravādins also mentions them as a branch of the Mahāsāṅghikas.[1] In the *Kathavatthu Aṭṭhakathā* (Commentary) Buddhaghosa (c. 4th Cent.A.D.) refers to different branches of the Mahāsāṅghikas of both the South and North-West Groups.[2] Vasumitra who flourished during the reign of Kaniṣka (c. 1st or 2nd Cent. A.D.) deals in greater detail with the N.W. Group of the Mahāsāṅghika in the *Mahāvibhāṣāśastra* than the Southern Group, for he was probably more familiar with this branch which had its strongholds in this part of the country.[3] Obviously a group of the Mahāsāṅghikas settled in the N.W. part, most probably at Uḍyāna.

The above account of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the establishment of a branch of them at Uḍyāna as early as one hundred years after the death of the. Buddha confirms that Uḍyāna, the eastern part of Afghanistan, became a strongholds of this branch of the 'Later Theravāda' school of Buddhism at a very early period.

Sambhuta Saṇavasi

In the Second Buddhist Council an Arhanta Thera named Sambhūta Sānavāsī played a very important role in settling the disputes among the monks on 'Ten Points'. He was an old monk who had joined the Saṅgha, under Ānanda after the Buddha's death and attained arhantaship in due course. When the Second Buddhist Council was held, he was residing at Ahogaṅ-gapabbata. He was also called Sāṇavāsī simply because he wore the robe made of *sana* (hemp).[4] His place of main residence was at a monastery near Mathura. He also moved to Kipin from Mathura and stayed there for some time.[5] Kipin has been identified with Kapisa by scholars.[6] Hiuen-Tsiang says that Kipin was the land of *'Yavansas'* (Yen-mo-na).[7] Although his main residence was at Mathura, he also stayed in the north and north-west regions of Indian sub-continent for some time, which is significant to note. Hiuen-Tsiang records that he had seen his

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1. Dutta N. : *The Buddhist Sects in India*, pp. 69-70.
2. *Ibid.*, : P.-68.
3. Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India* p.-70.
4. *D. P. P. N.* : Vol.-II, P.-1063.
5. Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, pp. 120-121.
6. Dey, N. L. : *The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India* (1971),p.-91.
7. Beal S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, introduction, p.-XLII; p.-119.

'hemp robe of nine parts dyed in red colour and his iron pot that were kept in a monastery some *li* from Bamiyan.'[1]

Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī was actively associated with the Second Buddhist Council. We also find him belonging to the main branch of Early Theravāda school, the Vibhajjavāda which was opposed to the Mahāsāṅghikas. It appears that the Mahāsāṅghikas settled at Uḍyāna and other places in Afghanistan after being separated from the main branch of Theravāda school of Buddhism. They also established their strongholds at some other places in that area. Later, Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī also went to this region in order to establish the Early Theravāda views to which he belonged and to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas. He then probably stayed at Kipin or Kapiśa for some time and also in a monastery near Bamiyan. This story of Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī also affirms our presumption that Buddhism got established in Afghanistan 100 years after the death of the Buddha when the Second Buddhist Council was held. Probably both the schools, the Early Theravāda and Later Theravāda led by Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī and the Mahāsāṅghikas respectively reached this country where they probably established their own centres. Probably the Mahāsāṅghikas were stronger than the main school of the Theravādins. When Hiuen-tsiang visited Bamiyan in 7th Century A.D., he found there a great stronghold of the Lokuttaravādins (a group of the Mahāsāṅghikas) who are credited to have erected the two colossal images of the Buddha there.

Next Introduction

During the time of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka (269-232B.C.) the Third Buddhist Council was convened in order to settle some doctrinal differences that had cropped up in the Saṅgha. At the end of the Council, the Vibhajjavāda was declared as the true doctrine of the Buddha. The supporters of this view were regarded as the true followers of the Theravāda Buddhism. Aśoka himself supported this school of Buddhism. It is also known that at the end of the Council, Buddhist missioneries were despatched to distant parts in India and also outside. [2] Out of them, two missionaries where sent to the North and North-west of Indian sub-continent. Thera Majjhantika was made responsible to disseminate Buddhism in Kaśmira and Gandhāra while

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
2. *Dīpavaṃsa* : Ch.-VIII; *Mahāvaṃsa* : Ch.-XII; *Samantapasadika*, (Nalanda Ed.), Vol.-III, pp. 54 ff., and others.

Thera Maharakkṣhita was despatched to 'Yona' country. Gandhāra was next to the eastern part of Afghanistan (Uḍyāna) across the Indus and 'Yona' country was the interior land of Afghanistan where the Yonas or Greeks had settled after the invasion of Alexander the Great. Both these regions were under Aśoka's empire. It is also significant to note that one monk from Yona country, namely, 'Yonaka Dhamma-rakkhita' was also selected by the Council for the propagation of Buddhism in the country of Aparantaka (Konkana). The selection of Yonaka Dhammarakkhita out of one thousand learned Arahanta members of the Council as a leader of a missionary to establish Buddhism in India itself, is singularly important to note. This Buddhist monk hailing from Yona country should have had some training or even initiation into Buddhism in his own country before coming to Pāṭaliputra, although we know nothing about the place or person where and under whose influence he became a Buddhist monk. But it appears probable that he was initiated to Buddhism while he was in his home land in Afghanistan and later he came to India for higher training and learning, in which he of course gradually got proficiency. Because of his saintly character and erudite proficiency he was selected as the leader of a party going to Aparantaka for propagation. Yonaka Dhamma-rakkhita was well-versed in Pali texts and we find that when he reached Aparantaka country, he preached the *Aggikhandhopamasutta* (A sutta from the *Aṅguttaranikāya*- IV p.-128 ff.), in which the Buddha has stressed the 'pure life' of a monk. The same *sutta* was delivered by Mahinda also who went to Ceylon for the same purpose.[1] By the recitation of this *sutta* as delivered by Yonaka Dhammrakkhita some thirty seven thousand people are said to have received Pabbajjā and become monks.[2] His great achievements and spiritual proficiency lead us to infer that he had his earlier training in his motherland i.e. in Afghanistan and after that he came to India where he got prominence. Another fact also deserves our consideration. Unlike the other places where only one monk was made responsible for the propagation of one country, the despatch of two missionaries to the N.W. area under the leadership of Majjhantika and Maharakkhita is remarkable. We have seen above that the Mahasanghikas, who earlier branched off from the pure Theravāda school of Buddhism, had already settled in Uḍyana (E. Afghanistan); and probably its branch, the Lokuttaravādins had also established some centre at Bamiyan, soon after the Second Buddhist Council. The

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1. *Mahavaṃsa*, Ch.-XV, 176; *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, 133.
2. *Mahavaṃsa*; XII. 34; *Mahābodhivaṃsa* : p.10

Third Buddhist Council was held during the reign of Aśoka to thrash out the 'wrong' views opposed to the Vibhajjavāda. Because of the Mahasanghikas being very strong in Afghanistan and in other parts of N.W. Indian sub-continent, it was considered expedient to despatch two missionaries to this side instead of one. This arrangement probably had some desirable effect. When Arhanta Majjhantika went there, he found the Nagā king Aravāḷa there whom he converted to Buddhism.[1] He was probably a feudatory of Aśoka. Thera Mahārakkhita went to the Yona country and by his preaching 'one hundred and seventy thousand' are said to have adopted Buddha's faith and as many as 'ten thousand' became monks and entered into the Saṅgha.[2] But it may be remembered that in spite of royal support of Aśoka and veteran efforts by these missionaries, the Mahāsāghikas and its other branches probably held their influence there, as we find the Lokuttaravādins flourishing in Bamiyan in 7th century A.D. when Hiuen-tsiang visited this place. It is very likely that Early Theravāda centres might have come up at some places like Kapiśa, Kandahar or Balkh; but it is difficult to account for them definitely at the present stage.

Kandahar is the southern part of Afghanistan, where the Greaco-Aramaic inscription of Aśoka has been discovered. It was called Arachosia by the Greeks which was ceded to Candragupta Maurya by Seleucus after the latter's defeat. At Kandahar the military was stationed by to guard the borders. The present name of the town and the area around as 'Kandahar' appears to have derived its name from the Sanskrit word *'Skandhāvāra'*, meaning 'military regimental centre'. The district near the old Kandahar town is called *'Daṇḍa'* at present. This word means 'army' in Sanskrit. Obviously, it has retained its old name simply because of being a centre of army which was stationed there by the Mauryan kings in the beginning. It is very likely that most of the soldiers and other military officials who went from India, some even from the capital Pāṭaliputra, must have had their faith in Buddhism. These Buddhist military personnels would have natural leanings towards the proselytising activities that were revitalised by the Buddhist emperor Aśoka through the missionaries who were despatched there at the end of the Third Buddhist Council. It would of course be too hazardous to jump to any conclusion regarding the contributions of these military men towards the propagation of Buddhism there; but, it can well be presumed that Kandahar was also a Buddhist centre during Aśoka's time. Some twenty kms. east from Kandahar, there is a small Bazar now called Panjavai. Near this town there is a hillock which local people call 'Budhavan'. A very large ancient cave forming a big hall has been dug out on this hill. Before we approach this hill we find two stupas in stone boulders, now in ruinous state, which local people call 'Buddhavan Darwaza', simply because they stand side by side at a distance of about ten metres each and look like the two pylons of a gate. Budhavan hill and Buddhavan Darwaza obviously got their names after the Buddha. Similarly, the phonetic similarity leads us to infer that the name of the town as Panjavai may be a derivative of the word *'Pañcavaggiya'*, the First Five Disciples of the Buddha. This cave and the stūpas have yet to be thoroughly explored, but there is no doubt that this area near Kandahar was definitely a centre of Buddhism, probably from the very early time of the Mauryan emperor Asoka. Archaeological explorations in and around Kandahar have been rather scanty; and if a serious search is made, the history of Buddhism, so obscure at present, may receive new dimensions.

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[1] *Mahavamsa* : Ch.-XII, 3.9 ff.; *Dipavamsa* : Ch.-VIII. 113; *Samantapasadika*: Vol.-I.64,67.

[2] *Ibid.*

Thus, Buddhism in Afghanistan was introduced in three successive times. First, it was carried by Tapassu and Bhallika and also by the Sākyas. Later it was firmly established by a group of the Mahāsāṅghika monks, and finally, by the Buddhist Missionaries during the time of the great Buddhist emperor Aśoka.

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JALALABAD
A Seat of Mahāsāṅghikas

We propose to take up the important Buddhist places of Afghanistan in order to make an endeavour to trace the history of Buddhism in that particular region. At the outset we start with the eastern-most part of the country where Buddhism reached quite early and remained as the faith of the people for centuries. No part of Afghanistan is so rich in Buddhist monuments and antiquities as this south-eastern-most region, now called Jalalabad, earlier known as Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna and also Nagarahāra in ancient literatures and epigraphs. Extensive Buddhist monuments, such as, stūpas, vihāras, caves, sculptures in different forms and designs and other artefacts and antiquities are copiously replete at numerous places of this region. The antiquities recovered from them are of great historical and cultural significance. They all point to the great importance of the place that it once held in the Buddhist world in ancient days. We have recovered from this region as many as three Aśokan inscriptions, although fragmentary, an epigraph referring to Menander, two inscribed relic-caskets of the Buddha and several other antiquities of great cultural and historical value. The icons and stūpas found in different forms and sizes are in abundance. Some of the antiquities found from a place called Hadda are the excellent pieces of Graeco-Buddhist Art which number in hundreds. Innumerable caves discovered from Baswal and Dauranta and other places which were the great Buddhist monastic establishments, once thrived there where lived a thick population of monk-scholars and saints. The places like Chahar Bagh, Begram, Bimran, Passani, Nagara, Kotpur, Gudara, Nandara, Barabad, Sultanpur, Khugyani and above all Hadda and several other ancient sites, some explored and excavated while others still await scientific investigations have yielded numerous antquities of great cultural and religious significance. They all stand as a testimony to the fact that Jalalabad area was a flourishing and perhaps the most sacred and renowned centre of Buddhism in Afghanistan. Probably there is no place in this country which can stand even equal to this place albeit superior to its religious and cultural importance. Numerous sacred relics of the Buddha and other Arahantas were enshrined in this area during different periods which are since exhumed from many stūpas. The Buddhist pilgrims coming from distant places like China, Korea, Central Asia and even from India considered it a 'must' to pay a visit to this place in order to pay their homage and veneration to these sacred monuments, particularly the skull-relic of the Buddha at Hadda.

Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra

Being contiguous to Gandhāra, Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra was also a familiar place to merchants, mendicants, ascetic-wanderers and tourists in ancient times. The province of Jalalabad is presently designated as 'Ningarahara' or 'Nungnihara' following the policy adopted by the Afghan Government to revive the ancient historical names of the places, as, in the similar strain, Haibak or Aibak got its old name 'Samangan' (Samaṇagāma) in official-records. The headquarters of this province is Jalalabad which was founded by Jalaluddin Ahamad Akabar (1556-1605 A.D.), the Great Mughal emperor of Delhi after his own name.

Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna

Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna (Oḍḍiyāna) is the most ancient name of this region, known both from literary and epighraphical sources. The ancient country of Uḍyāna lay between the regions covering Kabul-river-Valley upto Siah Koh or even beyond in Jalalabad in the west across the Khaibar Pass and in the east upto the western bank of the river Indus, the modern Swat Valley (in Pakistan), beyond which was the country of Gandhāra. Ptolemy, the Greek geographer has correctly described the exact location of Uḍyāna. He informs that 'Dionyspolis' is the capital of the country 'Dionyso' (i.e. Uḍyāna), which lay between the Kabura (i.e. the Kabul river) and the Indus.[1] Uḍyāna is also known to Pāṇini as referred to in the Kātyāyana as Urḍī and Aurḍayāni (Vartika on IV.2.99).[2] In the classical Sanskrit literature,

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[1] Cf. Cunningham, A. : *A. G. I.*, P.-39; Law, B.C. : *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, p.-113; Dey, N.L. : *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Med. India*, p.-135.

[2] Cf. Aggarwal, V.S. : *India as known to Panini*, P.-234.

Uḍyāna is known from the Mahābharata in which the people of the Uḍyāna are called Odra.[1] In the Pali Tipitaka the people of Uḍḍyāna are described as Oḍḍaka. In the Apadāna, names of several tribes occur and Oḍḍaka is enumerated as one of them.[2] Uḍḍyāna was also renowned for blankets as Kāśī was noted for silk fabrics. In the Mahāvaṇija Jātaka (No. -493) it is mentioned thus : *Kaśikāni ca vatthani Uḍḍyāne ca Kambale* (IV.352). In the Buddhist Sanskrit texts Udyana or Uddyana is referred to several times as a country beyond the Indus in the west or north-west.[3] In the *Āryamūla-sarvāstivāda Nikāya* four sects of Buddhism, viz. Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptiya, Mahisāsaka and Kaśyapīya are mentioned, in which the last three of them are said to have been found only in Uḍyāna.[4] Uḍyāna is also mentioned in the Purāṇas as Uḍyānaka.[5]

As a matter of fact by the 4th or 5th century A.D. the ancient country of Uḍyāna appears to have attained two separate identities. The western part extending from the Kabul river valley (the Jalalabad valley) in the west to the Khyber pass in the east was known as Nagar or Nagarahāra, after which the town was also called by the same name, while its eastern part comprised the area that lay between Khaiber pass in the west and the western bank of the Indus in the east, usually called Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna. But it must be remembered that in the larger sense both the parts were known as Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna, for the one and same country. Ptolemy stands as a testimony to it which we have referred to above and confirmed by some other evidences of later days, which we will discuss later.

The Chinese monk-travellers who came to India through Afghanistan invariably paid their visits to this country and they have mentioned two parts of this region separately one as Uḍyāna and the other as Nagarahāra (or Nagara). They usually visited this country to pay their homage to the sacred relics of the Buddha, particularly the skull-bone-relic of the Buddha enshrined in a vihāra at Hadda, near Jalalabad. Fa-hsien (399-414 A.D.) is the first Chinese traveller known to us who paid a visit to Hadda to venerate the skull-bone relic. He came to the capital, Nagara or Nagarahāra where the tooth-relic of

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1. See *Mahābhārata* II. 31-74; Cf. Cunningham, A. : *Op. Cit.*, pp.68-69; Dey, N.L. : *Op. Cit.*, P.-209; Stein, A. : *Serindia*, Vol.-I, P.-2.
2. *Apadāna* (P.T.S.), II. 358; Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-I, P.-464.9
3. *Cf.* Edgerton, F. : *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, P.-135.
4. Cf. Takakusu, J. : *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and Malaya Archipelago* (671-695) by Itsing, General Introduction, P.-XXIV.
5. Cf. Dey N.L. : *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient & Mediaeval India* , P.-211. It is mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* (Svarga-Ch. 19).

the Buddha was enshrined, probably at Dauranta (i.e. *Dantārāma*). He calls the capital *Na-kie* or *Nagara*. His three other companions, namely, Hui-ching, Hui-ta and Tao-chang had already come to the place previously in order to venerate these relics. Fa-hsien also mentions a country adjacent to *Woo-chang* (Uḍyāna) as *Soo-ho-to.*[1] which Cunningham has identified with the Swat valley, as a district of Uḍyāna.[2]

Sung-Yun (518 A.D) another Chinese monk-traveller who also paid a visit to this country calls it *U-chang*, (the transcription of *Ujjānaka* or *Uḍḍyāna*).[3] It has also been called *Ajuna* in later days,which Cunningham believes to be a 'corrupt form of Pali *Ujjāna*' (correct =*Uyyāna*, not *Ujjāna)* and 'Sanskrit Uḍyāna', a garden.[4] Some think that Uḍyānapura was the old name of the place.[5] In the introduction of the *Mahāyānasūtralaṅkāra* of Asaṅga, Professor S. Baghchi informs that Asaṅga (C.5th century A.D.) went to Uḍyāna from Magadha to answer the call of a merchant named Dhanarakṣita. Asaṅga is said to have hailed from Purusapura (Mod. Peshawar), which was located in Uḍyāna.[6]

Hiuen-tsiang (630-664 A.D.) visited Nagarahāra while coming from *Lan-po* (i.e. Lampaka or Laghman) and calls it *Na-kie-lo-ho*. He later visited Uḍyāna and calls it *U-chang-na*, a country beyond the Hindu Kush. He also informs that Nagarahāra was subordinate to the king of Kapiśa.[7] In the *Life of Hiuen-tsiang* the pilgrim is said to have arrived in the valley of *Ta-li-lo* (i.e. Darel in Ladakh?) which is identified with the site of the old capital of *U-chang-na* (*Uḍyāna*).[8]

Unlike the later literary records that we have referred to above, the epigraphic materials of early Christian era always call it *Uḍyāna* or *Oḍḍiana*; and not Nagarahāra. In one of the earliest Kharostī inscriptions engraved on a gold-plate describing the deposition of the relics of the Buddha in a stupa called 'Eka-Kūta', one Senavarma is said to be the 'king and lord' of Oḍī (i.e. Uḍḍyāna). The inscription also refers to the name of Kuṣāṇa king Kujula Kadphises and his scion Devaputra Sadakṣaṇa (i.e. Vima Kadphises), who were the overlords of this region in early Christian era.[1] Similarly a Bhikkhu named Jīvaka is said to be Oḍiyānaka, i.e. the inhabitant of Uḍḍyāna, in an inscription engraved on the round base of a pillar at Mathura. The monk is said to have donated this pillar to the vihāra of 'Mahārajātirajā Devaputra Huviṣka' in year 59.[2] Both these inscriptions belong to Kuṣāṇa period; and Uḍyāna was obviously a part of the Kuṣāṇa empire. We believe that the epigraphs refer to the same area of Uḍyāna as described by Ptolemy since Nagarahāra had not attained a separate entity and the town also had not yet got this name, at least till 3rd century A.D.. It was then probably *Uḍyānapura.*

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[1] Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, p.-15; Legge, J. : *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdom*, pp. 28-29; 37-40.

[2] Cunningham, A. : *Op. Cit.*, P.-69.

[3] Beal, S. : *Records of the Western Buddhist World*, Travels of Sung-Yun, Introduction, pp. LXXXIX, XCIII,-XCIX.

[4] Cunningham, A. *Op. Cit.*, p.-39: also Dey, N.L. : *Op. Cit.*, P.-211.

[5] William Simpson : *Identification of Nagarahāra*, *J.R.A.S.*, XIII, p.-190; Cf. Thomas Watters : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, P.-190; B. C. Law : *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, P. -113.

[6] *Mahāyānasūtralaṅkara of Asaṅga*, Edited by S. Baghchi, Introduction, P.-4.

[7] Beal, S. : *Op. Cit.* (Record....), Bk.-II, 91; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp. 57-58.

[8] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, P.-66.

It is only by the Fifth Century A.D. and onwards that Nagarahāra and Uḍyāna are to be regarded as the separate states, probably because of physical and geographical divisions of the land, which keep them set apart on account of lofty precipices of the Himalayas that stand just in the middle of ancient Uḍyāna. The Chinese travellers however have described them as separate states probably because of separate physical features of the country, although for centuries, in general, the whole country including both the parts continued to be called 'Uḍyāna' a neighbouring state of Gandhāra.

In about 8th century A.D. the Hindu Shahis, who were exterminated from the western part of Uḍyāna and had to shift their capital to Udbhāṇḍapur (Mod. Und near Attock in Pakistan) on account of incessant pressures of the Chinese and Turks from North and West. But, they appear to have retained their old territorial appellation, connected with their original country, Uḍḍyāna. An inscription engraved on an image of Ganeśa found from Gardez, a few miles away south of Kabul, now in Kabul town, in which Khingila Śāhī is designated as *Otyataśāhī*, i.e. Śāhī of Uḍyāna.[3] This clinches the issue that the land between Siah Koh in the west and the western bank of the Indus in the east beyond the Hindu Kush was generally called Uḍyāna. Nagarahāra however became an important town in later days for being a great centre of Buddhism from the very beginning and also for having several sacred corporeal relics of Buddha enshrined therein. In due course the area from Siah Koh to Safed Koh came to be known as the country of Nagarahāra. But as a matter of fact, the country as a whole was known as Uḍyāna, comprising both the parts extending to the east and west from the Khaiber pass.

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[1] See : *J.R.A.S.*- 1980 No. -1, H.W. Bailey : 'A Kharoṣṭhri- Inscription of Senavarma, a king of Oḍī', pp. 21-29; *Asiatic Society Bulletin* (Calcutta) Vol.-X, No.-1 (1981) : B.N. Mukherjee- *A New Light on the History of the Kushana Period*', pp. 11-15.

[2] *J.A.S.B.*, 1870, Pt.-I, P.-127. Here Rajendra Lala Mitra reads as *Oḍiyānakasya*, which should be read as Oḍiyānakasya, Cf. Plate No. -IV; *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol.-V, P.-182; *A.S.I.*, Vol.-III, No.-12, P.-33, Plate No.-XIV.

[3] *E.I.* Vol. -XXXV, pp. 44-47.

Nagarahāra or Nagaravihāra (?)

The earliest reference to Nagarahāra or Nagara occurs in the account of Fa-hsien (399-414 A.D..) who visited this place from Gandhāra in order to pay his homage to the sacred relics of the Buddha enshrined there, that we have mentioned above. Earlier, his three companions Hiu-ching, Hui-ta and Tao-cheng had already visited Hadda and other sacred places there to venerate the sacred relics of the Buddha. Fa-hsien came to Nagarahāra only after spending his *'vassāvāsa'* ('Rainy-season-resort') in *Woo-Chang* (Uḍyāna). It is remarkable to note that another Chinese traveller, Sung-Yun who visited this country after him in 518 A.D. calls it *U-Chang* i.e. Uḍyāna and not Nagarahāra, although he arrived here from Persian side. He gives a detailed description of *U-chang,* where he arrives from Shie-Mi (probably Samaṇa-grāma or Haibak) a country in the west. He was accompanied with another monk Hwei Sang. He describes, "In the middle of the 11th month we entered the country of *Shie-Mi*. This country is just beyond the *Tsung-ling* mountains (Hindu-Kush). On the first decade of the 12th month, we entered the U-chang country (Uḍyāna). On the north of this country borders on the Tsung-ling mountains; on the south it joins India. The climate is agreeably warm. The territory contains several thousand *li*."[1] Both these Chinese monks visited several sacred places in and outside the city. From Udyana they departed for Gandhāra country, which, they say, resembles the territory of *U-Chang*, and was formerly called the country of *Ye-po-lo* (the dragon, Apalāla).[2]

Hindukush

The other Chinese traveller who has left the account of this country is the famous monk-scholar Hiuen-tsiang who visited it in about 630 A.D.. He mentions first Nagarahāra and then Uḍyāna. He arrived at *Na-kie-lo-ho* (Nagarahāra) from the country of Lan-po (Lampaka or Langhman), where he stayed for some time. He says, "The country of Nagarahāra (*Na-Kie-lo-ho*) is about 600 *li* in circuit from east to west and 250 or 260 *li* from north to south. It is surrounded on four sides by overhanging prescipices and natural barriers. The capital is 20 *li* or so in circuit. It has no chief ruler; the commandant and his subordinates come from Kapiśa......... The climate is moist and warm."[1] He further informs that the country that lay between Nagarahāra and Gandhāra is *U-chang-na* (Uḍyāna). The capital town of this country is *Mung-kie-li* (Mangali = Maṅgalapura) from where the kings mostly reign.[2] From *U-to-kia-hen-cha* (Udbhāṇḍapura or Ohind) he passed over some mountains and crossed a river and travelling 600 *li* or so, arrived at the kingdom of *U-chang-na* (Uḍyāna).[3] *The Life of Hieun-tsiang* informs us that on his way back home the pilgrim lost some fifty of his manuscripts while crossing the river. At this time the king of Kapiśa, who then dwelt in the town of *U-to-kia-hen-che* (Utkhaṇḍa or Udbhāṇḍa) went himself to the river-side and escorted him till he arrived at his capital (Kapiśa). Hiuen-tsiang stayed in a vihara in Kapiśa for fifty days; and in the meantime, the king despatched some persons to Uḍyāna for the purpose of copying out the Tripitaka of the Kaśyapiya school.[4] This account of Hiuen-tsiang confirms that the kingdom of Kapiśa included Nagarahāra i.e. western part as well as the eastern extended part of Uḍyāna, beyond the Hindu-Kush.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Records of the Western Buddhist World*, Introduction, The Mission of Sung Yun and Hwei Sang', P.-XCIX.

[2] *Ibid.*, P.- XCIX.

Nagarahāra is also referred to in a Chinese text entitled *She-kia-feng-she*, written soon after Hiuen-tsiang, towards the close of 7th century A.D. There, it is recorded, "Going over than 100 *li* (from *Lan-po* = Lampaka) to the south-east, passing through a great mountain range and crossing a large river (the Indus), you reach the kingdom of *Na-kia-lo-ho*. It is over 600 *li* broad and more than 200 *li* long. It is surrounded in all four sides by mountains. The circuit of the capital is over 20 *li*."[5] This text also refers to the kingdom of *Wu-chang-na* (Uḍyāna) which was located in the north of the city of *Wu-to-kin-han-tu* (Utkhaṇḍa), across a mountain, at a distance of 600 *li*. Its capital is *Meng-kie-li* (Maṅgali).[6] Obviously this record is almost identical in substance to that of the itinerary or life of Hiuen-tsiang, mentioning Nagarahāra and Uḍyāna as two separate states.

But, it is remarkable to observe that in another Chinese record, the *Kau-fu-kao-sang-chuen*, translated by I-tsing (between 700-712 A.D.), Uḍyāna is mentioned as a country which comprises Nagarahāra and

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1. Beal, S. : *Ibid*, Bk.-II, P.-91; Cf. *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, P.-57 ff.
2. Beal, S. : *Ibid.*, Bk.-III, P.-121; Cf. Cunningham, A. : P.-69.
3. Beal, S. : *Ibid.*, Bk. -II, P.-118; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, P. 64; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan- Chwang*, P. -225.
4. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, P.-192.
5. *She-Kia-fang-che*, Translated by P.C.Baghchi (Shanti Niketan- 1959), P.-36.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

Hadda. It relates the story of three Chinese monks who set out by the northern route for Uḍyāna and also for the place of Buddha's skull-bone (Hadda). They are said to have died there and could not return home.[1] This account is clear enough to substantiate the fact that the whole area between Siah-Koh in the west and the western bank of the Indus in the east was popularly known as Uḍyāna, which included Nagarahāra (Jalalabad), the skull-bone-relic place (i.e. Hadda) in the west and the sacred places like the 'Shadow of the Buddha' situated in the east of the country.

Probably in later days, by 9th or 10th century A.D., Nagarahāra became a popular name of this region, as a country and also as its capital by the same name without any change in the old territorial boundaries of Uḍyāna which included the whole area between Peshawar in the east and Jalalabad in the west. An inscription of the time of Devapāladeva, a Pāla king of Bengal (c. 810-850 A.D.), recovered from a village called Ghosarawan, about 7 miles to the south-east of Bihar-Sharif, the headquarters of Nalanda district (Bihar State), records the erection of an edifice at Vajrāsana, i.e. Bodha Gaya Temple by Bhikṣu Vīradeva, son of Indragupta, who was born at Nagarahāra, the capital, eulogized as 'the ornament of the Uttarāpatha'. Bhikṣu Vīradeva is said to have studied in the Kaniska Mahāvihāra (at Peshawar) under Acarya Sarvajnaña Śānti, who initiated him into the Buddhist Saṅgha as a monk. He later became the head of the Saṅgha of Nalanda Mahāvihāra.[2]

The Kaniṣka Mahāvihāra, as referred to in the above epigraph, was located in Peshawar, which has been identified with the Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri and which was no doubt a part of the Nagarahāra state, from where Bhikṣu Vīradeva is said to have hailed. Nagarahāra rose to a great eminence primarily because of a number of sacred relics enshrined in and around the town. Probably, in later days, because of its great fame, the whole state began to be called by the same name, Nagarahāra. This does not seem to be unusual, as even today, the State of Bihar (in India) has got the name after the town Biharsharif, the ancient Odantapura Mahāvihāra. The country of Uḍyāna similarly came to be known as 'Nagarahara' which comprised the same old territory of ancient Uḍyāna.

We have referred to above the name of Nagarahāra or Nagara which first occurred in the accounts of Fa-hsien and who informs that going west (from Peshawar) for sixteen *yojanas*, he came to the city of

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1. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, Introduction, P.-XXXVI.
2. *J.B.A.S.*, Vol. -XVII, Pt. -I, pp. 492-501; *I.A.*, Vol. -XVII-1888, pp. 307-312.

Halo (Hadda) in the borders of the country of Na-kie, Nagara or Nagarahāra........ From this point traveling over one *Yojana* to the north, he arrived at the capital of Nagarahāra.[1] The direction and distance given by Fa-hsien is precisely correct.

Another Chinese traveller, Sung-yun, who came about a century later in 518 A.D., mentions the whole region as *U-chang* or Udyāna, which was obviously the ancient name of the country (and not Nagarahāra).[2] Hiuen-tsiang also confirms the location of Nagarahāra and mentions in his travels, "Going south-east from this country (*Lanpo* = Lampaka) 100 *li* or so, we cross a great mountain (ridge), pass a wide river and so come to *Na-kie-lo-ho* (or Nagarahāra)......."[3] As a matter of fact the country and town both were known as Uḍyāna by one and the same name in the beginning; and in later days the name of the town as "*Nagarahāra*" being renowned on account of many sacred relics of the Buddha therein, was designated for the whole country which extended upto the Safed Koh in the east. Another factor may be relevant to mention here in this context. It appears that the earliest name of the town was probably "*Nagaravihāra*", which later transformed into '*Nagarahāra*'. It appears that a vihāra was erected in the beginning at a place 'neither too close nor too far' from the town, as according to the Buddhist ecclesiastical rules,[4] and in due course by the expansion of the town, this vihāra became 'within' the town and hence, called 'Nagaravihāra' i.e. a 'vihāra within the city' (*Nagara*), after which, later, the town and eventually the whole area became to be known by the same name. This vihāra, may it be the first vihāra erected for the Mahāsāṅghikas, who came first here after being separated from the Early Theravāda School on the occasion of the Second Buddhist Council held at Vesali, one hundred years after the Mahaparinibbāna of the Buddha or this vihāra of Uḍyāna may be the same vihāra which was erected by Aśoka for the 'residence' of Mahārakhita Thera, who came to Yona country for the dissemination of Early Theravāda Buddhism after the Third Buddhist Council held during his reign. Hiuen-tsiang has witnessed a stūpa erected by Aśoka in Nagarahāra. Although we have not yet found the exact site where this most ancient and important vihāra of the town stood, it may

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1. Legge, J. : Op. Cit., P.-38; Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, P.-17; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, P. -XXXV.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, P. -XCIII.
3. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk. II, P. 91; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p. -57; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 182-183.
4. Cf. Upasak, C. S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 205-206.

however be located somewhere in Chahar Bagh area, which is supposed to be the ancient site of Nagarahāra town.

Phonetic simplification or transformation of the name *'Nagaravihāra'* into *'Nagarahāra'* is not at all an unusual derivation. We have several place-names where the syllable *'vi'* has been dropped from the term *'vihāra'* and *'hāra'* alone remains. There is a place called 'Kurkihara' in the Nawadah district of Bihar State from where some two hundred fifty bronze images of the Buddha and other deities and several Buddhist icons and inscriptions have been recovered. Ruins of several viharas have also been unearthed from there.[1] The name as Kurkihara was *'Kurakkavihāra'* or *'Kukutapada-vihāra'* in the beginning. Similarly, we know a place, also in Bihar, presently called 'Katihāra' which is evidently a transformation of its former name Kativihāra. Kumrahāra from where the ruins of the palace of Mauryan kings and several other antiquities have been discovered, has got its present name as derived from its ancient name *'Kumaravihāra'*, said to have been erected by Asoka.[2] Again the 'Āluvavihāra' has since shrinked to Aurihar, a place about 40 kms. north of Varanasi in Ghazipur district (U.P.) from where recently a number of Buddhist antiquities have been recovered by some archaeologists of Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi. But it may also be pointed out that there are some ancient places which still retain the term '*vihāra*' with their names; for instance, Kucavihāra in West Bengal, Mahavihāra (Mihintale) in Sri Lanka or Bihar, a province in India.

It should be borne in mind that phonetic transformation or simplification takes a very long time to change. Sometime it takes centuries or so. Fa-hsien, who first mentions its name as Nagarahāra or Nagara, visited the place several centuries after the establishment of the first ancient vihara, after which the country and the town came to be called Nagaravihāra. By the time of Fa-hsien (c. 410 A.D.) the term Nagaravihāra had already contracted to Nagarahāra which remained in use for several centuries afterwards. It is conspicuous to note that the usual practice of transliteration of the Indian terms into Chinese is to render according to the meaning of the term. But here they simply noted the current name of the country as pronounced by the people, *Na-ki-lo-ho*. In all probability the ancient name of the town was Nagaravihāra which later changed into Nagarahāra.

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[1] Patil D.R. : *The Antiquarian Remains in Bihar* (1965), p. 221-226; also *Cf.* Cunningham A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 387-388. Also *cf.* Kanhaiar in Kangra Distinct, nearDharmsala in the Himachal Pradesh (India) from where two inscriptions in Kharosti have been found describing as *Krisnasya ārāmo, C.I.I.*-Vol. II, pp. 178-179.

[2] Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.I, p. 615.

Establishment of the 'Vihāra' by the Mahāsāṅghika or by Aśoka (?)

We have seen above that the 'vihāra' in the capital of Uḍyāna was erected either by the Mahāsāṅghika monks or by Aśoka. It is said that a group of the early school of Mahāsāṅghika school of Buddhism went to Uḍyāna, while the other went to the south. It is likely that the Mahāsāṅghikas when arrived there established a *vihāra* near the town. In due course following the expansion of the town that *Vihāra* became *'within'* the city and hence it got its name as *'Nagara-vihāra'*, which ultimately was used for the whole town and as also for the country. The name of this vihāra as *Nagaravihāra* might have become popular only when many other vihāras would have come into existence outside or near the town. Probably it was the solitary monastery 'inside' the city for being the first monastic establishment in ancient days and hence was called *'Nagaravihāra'*.

We have suggested above that this vihāra (i.e. Nagaravihāra) might have been the donation of Aśoka in favour of Mahārakkhita Thera who came to this region for the dissemination of Early Theravāda Buddhism. Aśoka might have got erected a vihāra for him there, in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas who had already their strongholds there. Mahārakkhita was successful to some extent in his mission, as he is said to have converted 'one hundred seventy thousand people into Buddha's faith and got ten thousand entered into the Saṅgha as monks'.[1] It is also remarkable to note that as many as three epigraphs of Aśoka have been discovered from this area. Hiuen-tsiang witnessed there the stūpa erected by Aśoka. From a nearby place called Bimran, a bone-relic of the Buddha has been recovered from a stūpa. Fa-hsien and Huien-tsiang both mention a place where the tooth-relics of the Buddha were enshrined. No doubt, the place held great religious importance from the very early times. There appears every possibility that Aśoka might have built a vihāra at a suitable place near the town for Mahārakkhita and his companions. This vihāra of Aśoka naturally gained importance; and following the expansion of the town it became 'inside' the town and hence was to be called by the people *'Nagara-Vihāra'* to distinguish it from other viharas which had been erected outside the town in later days. Although the earliest name of the country was Uḍyāna, or

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[1] *Mahāvaṃsa*, XII.5, 39; *Dīpavaṃsa*, VIII.9; *Samantapasādikā* (Nalanda) Vol. -I, pp. 55-59.

Uḍḍyāna, but in due course, because of a important *Vihāra* 'within' the town, the capital and the country both came to be called *Nagaravihāra*, Later it contracted to become *Nagarahāra*.

Introduction of Buddhism in Uḍyāna

The Śinhalese Chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and the *Mahāvaṃsa* are important literary records which throw light on the dissemination of Buddhism in foreign countries by the missionaries of monk-saints during the reign of Aśoka. A Buddhist saint named Majjhantika Thera led the group of monks to Kasmira and Gandhāra and the other, Mahārakkhita Thera was made responsible to proselytise the Yona or Yonaka country. The decision to despatch missionaries to different lands took place at the end of the Third Buddhist Council convened at Pāṭaliputra to settle some philosophical and ecclesiastical matters that had cropped up in the Early Theravāda school of Buddhism. Aśoka patronised this school of Buddhism.[1]

From these sources we also learn the convention of the Second Buddhist Council which was held earlier at Vasali, one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, i.e. in about 385 B.C.. On this occasion the Early Theravāda school was split into two. The group that separated from the original Saṅgha, i.e. from the Early Theravāda was known as 'Mahāsāṅghika' for being the great number of its followers and they are also said to have held their *'Mahāsāṅgiti'* somewhere else after separation. They are also said to have migrated from Magadha in two groups, one to the south and the other to north or north-west India. The north-western group of the Mahāsāṅghikas arrived at Uḍyāna and established their strongholds there. They again, were divided into five or more sects, namely Ekavyavahārika, Kaukulika or Kurullaka, Bahuśrutiya, Prañjaptivādin and Lokuttaravādin on some minor doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences.[2] The Mahāsāṅghikas flourished in Uḍyāna for several centuries and probably established their centres at several places in Afghanistan outside Uḍyāna. In the *Sāriputra-paripricchāsūtra* (A Chinese translation of about 4th century A.D.) it is recorded that the Mahāsāṅghikas resided at Uḍḍiyāna along with the Sarvāstivādins, Dharmaguptas and Kāśyapīyas.[3] We have referred to above that the Mahāsāṅghikas established a *Vihāra* close to the town, which became the nucleus of Buddhist establishments there. We have also suggested that probably because of this *Vihāra* of the Mahāsāṅghikas, the town and eventually the whole country came to be known as *'Nagara-vihāra'* and later due to phonetic ease, it contracted to Nagarahāra. The Mahāsāṅghikas appear to be the first group of Buddhist monks who started to propagate Buddhism in Afghanistan as missionaries. The *Mahāvastu*, 'the *Vinaya* text of the Lokuttaravādins, describes Lokuttaravādins as a branch of the Mahāsāṅghikas.[1] In the *Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā* (Commentary), Buddhaghosa (C.5th century A.D.) refers to different branches of Mahāsāṅghikas, some of them dwelt in the south and some in northwest India.[2] Vasumitra, who flourished during the reign of Kaniṣka (c. 1st Century A.D.), deals in greater detail about the N.W. groups of Mahāsāṅghika in the *Mahāvibhāṣaśāstra* than the southern group, probably because he was more familiar with the group that had its stronghold in the N.W. region than the others.[3] That the Mahāsāṅghikas remained as a powerful sect of Buddhism in Afghanistan is also supported by an early epigraph of 1st century A.D. engraved on a relic-vase recovered from a place called Wardak, a place between Kabul and Ghazni.[4] It mentions the name of Mahāsāṅghikas and perhaps the earliest epigraphic record about them. The Chinese travellers' accounts of Fa-hsien, I-tsing, Huien-tsiang and Sung-Yun all speak about the Mahāsāṅghika or any of its branches that had their centres at several places in Afghanistan. Thus, the Mahāsāṅghikas, who established their centre first in Uḍyāna, and in due course also spread to other places where they established many centres in Afghanistan.

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[1] *Mahāvaṃsa*, Ch. XII, *Dīpavaṃsa*, Ch. VIII; Cf. *Sāsanavaṃsa*, Ch. IV.

[2] Dutta, No. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, P.-68.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī

We have earlier mentioned that in the Second Buddhist Council of Vesali one Thera Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī by name played a very important role in the Convention. He was an old monk who was ordained by Ānanda Thera, one of the apostles of the Buddha. He commanded a very high respect and veneration in the Early Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha. Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī vehemently opposed the views of the Mahāsāṅghikas. It is said that his main 'residence' was at Mathura but for sometime he moved to Uḍyāna and then to Kipin or Kapiśa, the land of Yavanas, in order to propagate the tenets of Early Theravada, perhaps with a view to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas who had settled in Uḍyāna earlier than him. Huien-tsiang witnessed his hemp-robe (of *sana*) in nine parts dyed in red and an iron pot (*Pātra*) in a monastery not very far from Bamiyan.[1] We however do not know anything about his religious activities in Uḍyāna or elsewhere in Afghanistan but he certainly was opposed to the Mahāsāṅghika's view. He probably could not be successful in his mission because of the firm hold of the Mahāsāṅghikas and so, later he returned to Mathura where he died.

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[1] Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, pp. 69-70.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.-70.

[3] *Ibid.*, p.-70.

[4] *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, Pt.-I, pp-165 ff.; *James Prinsep's Essays on Indian Antiquities* (1858) p. 61 ff; *JASB-XXX* (1861) pp. 337 ff.; *JRAS-XX* (1863) pp.255 ff.; *JASB-XXII* (1863), p. 428; *JRAS*; 1912, pp.1060 ff'. *E.I.* XI p.-202 ff. JA.XI. IV. (1914) pp.569 ff., *Ariana Antiqua* (1841), p. 117 ff.

Śākyas in Uḍyāna

We have also seen that Huien-tsiang has related a story of the migration of the Śākyas to Uḍyāna after being exterminated by the Kośala king Viḍūḍhabha, the son and successor of Praśenjit, in a revenge, during the life time of the Buddha. The Śākya prince who came to Uḍyāna got married with a Naga-girl and somehow or other with the help of the Nāgas managed to kill the king of Uḍyāna and occupied his kingdom. He had a son Uttarasena (*U-ta-lo-si-na*) by name who came to the throne after the death of his father. It is also related that during his time, the Tathāgata visited this place and soon after his departure from here, he passed away at Kusinārā. King Uttarasena having heard of the passing away of the Buddha sent some persons to Kusinārā to obtain a portion of the relics of the Buddha, which he managed to get and then enshrined it in a stūpa. This stūpa was visited by Huien-tsiang for offering his homage.[2] Sir Aurel Stein has identified this stūpa of Uttarasena with the stūpa of Shankardar in the Swat valley, which was then a part of Uḍyāna.[3] Fa-hsien also mentions the visit of the Buddha to Uḍyāna. He writes, "Tradition says that when Buddha came to Northern India, he visited this country (Uḍyāna)".[4] The Buddha's visit to Uḍyāna may not be a fact, just a mythological story as also prevalent in many other Buddhist countries who claim Buddha's visit in their respective countries. For

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1. Beal, S. : *On the Buddhists Records of the Western World*, Bk.I, p.53; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp. 53-54; Watters, T: *op. cit*, pp. 120-121.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-II, pp. 126-133.
3. *M.A.S.I.*, Vol. -42, pp. 30-32. It is interesting to find that a village near the Stupa is called Udegrāma, obviously derived from Uḍyānagrāma.
4. Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, p.-11; Legge J.: *Op.cit.*, p.-29; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, p.- XXXI.

instance, Sri Lankan people believe three visits of the Buddha in their country, so also the Burmese have the tradition of his visit in their country. But Buddha did never visit any of these countries; and so also the story of his visit to Uḍyāna may be equally fabulous.

Huien-tsiang is said to have met with the king of Bamiyan who was of the Śākyan race,[1] and who probably had moved from Uḍyāna to this place and made it his capital. Migration of the Śākyas from their homeland to different countries appears to be a fact as some Śākyas could escape to the Himalayas where they built a city;[2] while the other group of them led by Pāṇḍu, son of Amitodana (brother of Suddhodana) reached across the Ganges and founded a city. His daughter is said to have been married with king Pāṇḍukābhaya of Sri Lanka.[3] It might have been possible that a group of them migrated to Uḍyāna also where they reached after traversing many countries, a country not at all unknown to the people of the East in ancient days. No doubt the places like Gandhāra and Uḍyāna and even Balkh (Balhika) were certainly known to the people of E. India; and roads leading to these countries were traversed by traders, tourists, wandering mendicants, all alike. Brisk intercourse between India and these places was existing from the Buddha's days, which remained for several centuries onwards as well. The group of the Śākyas who might have arrived at Uḍyāna might have settled there soon after the attack of Viḍuḍhabha when the Tathāgata was alive.[4] It is also likely that by their settlement in Uḍyāna, the 'message' of the Buddha might have reached there through them, of course not in a missionary way. And if any grain of truth is attached to this story, Buddhism reached Uḍyāna, first by the Śākyas, exactly as it had arrived in Balkh (Balhika) by Tapassu and Bhallika during the lifetime of the Buddha. It is also not improbable to presume that the Buddhist monks, who used to take long journeys, mostly depending upon the *Satthavāhas* (touring merchants), might have arrived in Uḍyāna and other places in Afghanistan at a very early time, where they might have started the propagation of the Doctrine of the Buddha to the people. We have no positive evidences to our presumption, but when we take a stock of the antiquities, such as Buddha's relics, epigraphs, icons, coins etc. and that also of the large number of ancient Buddhist sites in the form of stūpas, caves, monasteries etc. and also take into account the descriptions left by the Chinese travellers, like Fa-hsien, Huien-tsiang, She-kia-Fang-che, Sung Yun and many others, they all go to confirm that Uḍyāna was probably the most ancient, sacred and important place of Buddhism in Afghanistan where probably the *Saddhamma* had arrived quite at an early time. Probably, Uḍyāna, the easternmost part of Afghanistan, was the first to receive Buddhism outside India, much earlier than all the other Buddhist countries of the world where Buddhism is flourishing even today.

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[1] Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-116; Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, P.-53.

[2] *Mahāvaṃsaṭikā* (Nalanda), p.- 144; Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol. -II, p.- 972, footnote No.-14.

[3] *Mahāvaṃsa*, Chapter-VIII, Verses 18-20; *Dipavaṃsa*, Chapter-X.1.

[4] For Viḍuḍhabha-episode see : *D.P.P.N.*, Vol. -II, pp. 876-877.

Mahāsaṅghika's Role in Udyāna

We have discussed above the story of the advent of the Mahāsaṅghikas to Uḍyāna after being separated from the Early Theravāda group on the occasion of the Second Buddhist Council, one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha where they were successful in establishing their strongholds. Even Sambhūta Sāṇavāsi, a veteran opponent of the Mahāsaṅghikas, who is said to have come to Kipin (Kapiśa) and also probably to Uḍyāna in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsaṅghikas could not find himself congenial in Uḍyāna and so shifted to Kipin (Kapiśa). He probably spent most of his time in Kapiśa and Bamiyan area in the west and could not establish any centre in Udyāna. It appears that the Mahāsaṅghikas had got their foot firmly established in Uḍyāna and any effort to undermine them or to reduce their influence proved ineffective. They remained powerful for centuries notwithstanding that they were divided into five or six groups by different names in later centuries, who had established their own centres at several places in Afghanistan.

Buddhism During Aśoka's Time

Aśoka, the Great Mauryan Buddhist Emperor's role for the expansion of Buddhism in the country and abroad is remarkable. He was a zealous follower of Early Theravāda Buddhism and during his time the Third Buddhist Council of this group of Buddhism was held at Pātaliputra in about 260 B.C. in order to weed out the so called 'heretic views' that had cropped up in Buddhism. At the end of the Council, missionaries led by eminent monk-saints were despatched to proselytise Buddhism in distant parts of the country and outside. north-western parts of his empire. Thera Majjhantika led a missionary to Kaśmīra and Gandhāra and Thera Mahārakkhita was made responsible for the propagation of Theravāda Buddhism in Yona or

Yonaka country about which we have discussed earlier. It is remarkable to note that two missionaries were sent to the north and north-western region unlike to other regions where only one mission was despatched. We have earlier seen that a branch of the Mahāsāṅghika had already made its firm establishment in Uḍyāna and also in the adjoining areas soon after being separated from the Early Theravāda group during the Second Buddhist Council, a century after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha. They were successful in popularising their own religious views among the people. They probably had also established their some centres in Gandhāra, the eastern region contiguous to Uḍyāna. It appears that their strong position in this North-Western region was known to Aśoka and so also probably to the members of the Third Buddhist Council..We also know about one Yona Dhammarkkhita Thera, who hailed from Afghanistan, and who was one of the leaders of the missionaries despatched to Aparāntaka (Konakana) country for propagation. It is likely that he had the knowledge of the popular and strong position of the Mahāsāṅghikas in his own country; and so it is very possible that he suggested to despatch two missionaries to the north and north-west region instead of one. We also know that this whole area was under the Mauryan empire and Aśoka too must have had the knowledge of the strong position of the Mahāsāṅghikas in that area. Perhaps, that they being very strong and popular there it was considered expedient in the Third Buddhist Council to despatch two missionaries to this region instead of one as elsewhere.

Whether Thera Mahārakkhita stayed at Uḍyāna or went further west to Kapiśa or to Balkh among the Yonas is precisely not known. Perhaps he stayed at Uḍyāna for some time and a vihara was erected for him in the capital. We have earlier suggested that how the capital of Uḍyāna, in the beginning, got the name as 'Nagaravihāra' on account of this vihāra and later for being 'within' the town, in due course it became simplified as 'Nagarahāra.' This vihāra was probably erected for the 'abode' of Mahārakkhita by Emperor Aśoka if not built by the Mahāsāṅghikas. But, we have no record to discern it. Mahārakkhita Thera might have stayed for some time in Uḍyāna and later probably moved to other places in the west or south-west of Afghanistan to propagate Early Theravāda Buddhism on account of the strongholds of the Mahāsāṅghikas.

We know that the Early Theravāda Buddhism received patronage from Aśoka, and perhaps the capital of Uḍyāna, Nagaravihāra or Nagarahāra also might have become a centre of the activities of this group for some time, atleast during the reign of this Buddhist emperor.

We have discovered as many as three epigraphs of Aśoka from Uḍyāna area, also an inscribed relic-casket of the Buddha from Bimran, a village close to modern town of Jalalabad. Hiuen-tsiang informs us that he had witnessed the stūpa erected by Aśoka in Nagarahāra. Aśoka is credited to have built 'eighty four thousand' stūpas and vihāras throughout his empire and so he might have got erected some vihāras and stūpas in Uḍyāna also as elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Where is the 'Nagara-Vihāra' in Jalalabad ?

Ancient Buddhist monuments are scattered in and around Jalalabad and one can see there Buddhist caves and stūpas from a distance. Near the town, in some villages, ancient monasteries and stūpas are still in extant in ruins. Numerous ancient sites stand in mounds; and some of them have been opened and explored by archaeologists while others remain in desolate condition unexplored. C. Masson opened a very large stūpa near Jalalabad at a place called Khwaja Lahoree which stands near the Kabul river. On the skirt of this village a hamlet is still called 'Begram'[1] (*Vihāragrāma*) where, he says, "tradition assigns an ancient city called Lahoree". He claims that the site near Tapa Lahoree may have been the chief city of the country.[2] General Cunnigham endorsed the views of Masson and regarded Begram area as the ancient site of the capital town of Nagarahāra.[3] William Simpson has written a long article on the 'Identification of Nagarahāra' and has suggested another site for the main town of this country. He thinks that the area around Chaharbagh, on the right bank of the Surkhab, at its junction with the Kabul river, there are numerous remains of an old town of importance and is the site of the ancient city of Nagarahāra. There is still a place called 'Nagara' or 'Nagaraka' or 'Nagaret'.[4] Simpson also carried some excavations at Nagara Goondee and discovered the remains of a very large stupa about 300 ft. in circumference. This stūpa, he believes, must have stood within the city. Recently Professor Mizuno of Kyoto University (Japan) and his party made a survey of the area and expressed almost an identical view that the centre of the ancient town of Nagarahāra should be located near

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[1] It is interesting to find that the villages of the same name are found at Kapiśa and Kabul also, obviously a later habitation which arose near a Vihāra and hence called Vihāragrāma, or Begrama.

[2] *Ariana Antiqua*, A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan, Chales Masson, Edition by H.H. Wilson, P.- 99.

[3] Cunningham, A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, P.- 39.

[4] *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIII (1881), pp. 184-199.

Chaharabagh.[1] It is also interesting to note that Charles Masson opened as many as six stupas at Chaharbagh, out of which, four stūpas yielded the bone relics or ashes contained in steatite vases; and the other two (No.-2&3) did not contain anything inside, as they were probably the *Uddeśika* or 'votive stūpas' or offerings to those stupas which contained the corporeal relics (*Saririka*). He also recovered some coins of Kaniṣka (in stūpa No.-4) and of Maues Kadphises (in stūpa No. -5). He noticed a number of other mounds which he calls *'tumuli'* and opened some of them and found nothing, obviously they being either the *Uddeśika stūpas* or vihāra sites. Masson was mainly a treasure seeker and not an archaeologist. His explorations were conducted haphazardly for having no proper acumen to explore ancient monuments. He therefore considered some important Vihāra sites as worthless simply because they did not yield any treasure or any other valuable object.

Professor Mizuno during his exploration of the stūpa sites of Chaharbagh has been able to identify a number of monastic sites near the stūpas which were earlier called by Masson *'tumuli'*. He noticed ruins of a monastery, measuring 30-40 mtrs. square, with monk-cells to the south of stupa No. -2. Another large ruin of a monastery of 40-50 mtrs. was noticed to the south of the stūpa No.-4. with some monks' cells made of mud-brick-walls with niches. A monastery with its courtyard and a water tank exist to the south of a tumulus. He also identified another tumulus which is the ruin of a stūpa; and by the side of which is another monastery in oblong shape. In all, Professor Mizuno discovered as many as the remains of eleven monasteries near the mounds of Chahar Bagh which Masson took them *'tumuli'* of no importance.[2]

In all probability, the Chahar Bagh area may be the ancient site of the town where that important *Vihāra* stood which later, by the expansion of the town, became 'within' the town, and hence called *'Nagara-Vihāra'*, after which the whole town began to be so called. In course of time, after a few centuries the 'Nagara-Vihāra' changed into 'Nagarahāra' on account of phonetic-ease. Originally the town was perhaps called 'Udyanapura' as suggested by M. Vivien de St. Martin.[3]

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1. *Ibid.*, P.- 199; Cf. Mizuno S. : *Hazar Sum and Fil-Khana*, (Kyoto) (1967), P.-69.
2. Mizuno, S. : *Hazar Sum and Fill Khana*, (Kyoto) (1967), P.-68 ff. Cf. *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 100-104.
3. Cf. Cunningham, A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, p. -39.

Menander and Udyāna

Menander (Pali Milinda) is a well-known Buddhist Indo-Greek king who ruled over Uḍyāna (Jalalabad) in about 2nd century B.C. He became the follower of Early Theravāda Buddhism under the influence of a Buddhist monk, Nagasena by name. The story of philosophical discussion held between Thera Nagasena and king Milinda is recorded in the famous Pali book the *Milindapañho*. This discussion is said to have taken place in his capital Sāgala, modern Sialkot in Pakistan. Menander became a zealous Buddhist and is said to have erected many stūpas and vihāras. His devotion to Buddhism was intense and he got some Buddhist symbols, like Dharmacakra, elephant, lion depicted on his coins. Perhaps after Aśoka, he was the only king who patronised the Early Theravāda Buddhism. A relic casket containing the corporeal relics of the Buddha was recovered from a place called Shinkot, (Bajaur), a few miles away to the south-east of Jalalabad town. The casket bears a Kharosti inscription which refers to the name of king Menander, and the Buddha's relic is said to have been enshrined by a feudatory of him.[1] The erection of the stupa containing the relics of the Buddha indicates that Buddhism was in a flourishing state in this area; and probably both the schools, *viz.* the Mahāsāṅghika and the Early Theravāda Buddhism were followed and practised by the people. We however do not know to which school of Buddhism the depositor of the Buddha's relic, Vijayamitra or his father Viyakamitra whose names occurs on the relic casket inscription, belonged; but, very likely they were the followers of Early Theravada Buddhism.[2] The school of Mahāsāṅghika was also flourishing in Afghanistan during that period as it is evident from the Wardak Vase Inscription of year 51 (A.D. 179) discovered from a place about 30 miles west of Kabul which refers to the Mahāsāṅghikas as the 'Custodian of the vihāra', about which we have referred to earlier.[3] Menander was noted for erecting vihāras and stūpas; and possibly that some of the stūpas and vihāras found at Hadda and at some places near Jalalabad might have been the edifices erected by king Menander. Further discoveries may confirm it.

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[1] *E.I.*, Vol.-XXIV, pp. 1-8; XXVI, pp. 318-321; XXVII, pp. 52-58.

[2] Cf. *E.I.*, Vol. -XXIV, pp. 3-4. N.G. Majumdar rightly observes that the Theravādins have a pious conception regarding the corporeal relics of the Buddha, as elucidated in the Mahāvaṃsa.

[3] *C.I.I.*, Vol. -II, pp. 165-170 and others.

Kaniṣka and Uḍyāna

The Great Kuṣānā emperor Kaniṣka was the follower Vaibhāṣika school of Buddhism which was a branch of the Sarvāstivāda.[1] It is also well-known that the Sarvāstivāda school branched off from the Mahāsāṅghika school. We also know that the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Sarvāstivādins flourished in India as well as outside the country for several centuries together. During the time of Kaniṣka both the schools besides some other schools of Buddhism had their centres in Uḍyāna. It is generally believed that some of the stupas and vihāras in and around Jalalabad and Hadda were erected during the reign of this great Buddhist emperor. As a matter of fact Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra was not politically so important as Kapiśa or Peshawar during this period but it wielded utmost religious and cultural significance on account of a number of sacred relics that were enshrined there.[2] It also marked importance for being the great stronghold of the Mahāsāṅghikas and also of the Early Theravāda school, which had their monastic centres and shrines established centuries earlier. Certainly Kaniṣka, being a zealous Buddhist, might have come to Nagarahāra from Kapiśa, his western capital, to venerate the sacred relics preserved there. He might have added some edifices and viharas to this great place of religious importance. An inscribed relic casket of Bodhisattva (Buddha) is recovered from one of the stūpas of Hadda. It mentions year 28 when the relic was deposited and refers to the 'Principal share of merit' for the king. Sten Konow regards the year 28 of this record as that of Kaniṣka era and the king none other than the Great Kuṣāṇa king, Kaniṣka to whom the 'principal share of merit' is assigned.[3] The contribution of Kaniṣka towards the development of the centres of Buddhism at Nagarahāra, although not definitely known , must have been significant. Further discoveries may help us to know more relevant facts throwing more light on the religious activities of Kaniṣka in this area.

Hey-day of Buddhism in Udyāna (Nagarahāra)

As elsewhere in Afghanistan so also in Uḍyāna, Buddhism was followed and practised with great devotion and zeal by the people and nobility all alike during Kuṣāṇa period. Kuṣāṇa kings, particularly Kaniṣka patronised Buddhism with full devotion and fervour; and probably this was the age of great renaissance of Buddhism throughout

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1. Cf. Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, P. -134 ff.
2. Cf. *C.I.I.*, Vol. -II, Bimran Vase Inscription, p. -50 ff.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.157-158.

Afghanistan. We know that Kaniṣka is the only Buddhist king who issued coins bearing the figure of the Buddha (Śākyamuni) with his name. He was greatly devoted to Buddhist practices and took keen interest in philosophical and doctrinal principles of Buddhism. He convened the so called Fourth Buddhist Council at Kuṇḍalavana in Kaśmīra in which the philosophical deliberations were held and at the end of the Council the Vibhāṣāśāstra of the Sarvāstivādin school of Buddhism was rendered. Kaniṣka probably himself took part in this Convention. Although he patronised Viaibhāṣika school of Theravāda Buddhism, he also showed equal regard to other schools already current in Afghanistan. We have earlier referred to an epigraph found from Wardak which refers to the Mahāsāṅghikas.[1] As a matter of fact this was a period of renaissance of Buddhism in this country. Early School of Theravāda Buddhism (of Pali-Scriptures) probably could not prosper in this country like the other Early Theravāda countries, such as Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand etc. where Buddhist scriptures in Pali were adopted. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, the branches of this later school, being earlier separated, flourished and made a great headway and established great centres in Uḍyāna, Bamiyan, Kapiśa and other places. They adopted the scriptures written in Buddhist Sanskrit instead of Pali of which several texts have been found. Kaniṣka's period is supposed to be the beginning of Mahāyana Buddhism. This is the period when the iconographical art took a new dimension , and a number of Buddhist sculptures in the form of the images of Buddha and other deities began to be carved out on stone. A new art, usually called Gandhāra Art or Graeco-Indian Art was developed and thousands of specimens of it can be seen in sculptures and in paintings of this period. In fact, the Buddha began to be deified as 'supramundane' or 'superhuman'. This Buddhist Art received new dimensions by representing the Buddha as a celestial being and the Bodhisattvas and other deities as superhuman. The best pieces of this Buddhist art are of this period which can be seen at Hadda in Afghanistan and other places in Gandhāra area.

As in sculpture so also in architecture some changes took place during this period. The stupas recovered from many places in Afghanistan, particularly from Hadda and Jalalabad are the best specimens of the period. Although the ancient model of Buddhist stupas (without railing) of Mid-India was followed in the North-West, it began to consist a low terrace and a hemispherical dome at the top with stairs at one point or at cardinal points. The stūpas sometimes show in insertion of a drum in between base and dome and multiplication of the terraces in making. The drums often have the trilobed niches, usually decorated with the installation of the images of the Buddha and other deities.

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[1] *E.I.*, Vol. - XI, pp. 210 ff.

The stūpas of Sultanpur, Chahar Bagh, Bimran, Dauranta in Jalalabad or the stūpas at Hadda area are erected in this style and they are supposed to be dated in 3rd or 4th century A.D. But some of them may be placed even earlier on the basis of the antiquities recovered from them; for instance, the Bimran stupa of Jalalabad, or one from Hadda which contained the inscribed relic caskets[1] of Kaniṣka's period.

Buddhism in 5th Century A.D. in Uḍyāna

The travel account of Fa-hisen (399-414 A.D.) is probably the best record which reveals the flourishing condition of Buddhism in Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra. We have referred to earlier his tour, first to Uḍyāna and then to *Halo* or Hadda and finally to Nagarahāra. We have also mentioned, how three of his companions had visited the skull-relic of the Buddha at Hadda prior to him. As his account goes, he first arrives at *Woo-chang* or Uḍyāna after crossing a large river, probably the Indus, which lies due north of India. He says, "The language of Mid-India (i.e. Buddhist Sanskrit) is universally used here. ...... The religion of Buddha is extremely flourishing. They call the places where the priests live or temporarily lodge 'Gardens for Assembly' (i.e. Saṅghārāma or monastery). There are altogether five hundred monks, all belonging to the Lesser Vehicle. If any wandering mendicant-priests arrive, they are told to shift for themselves. Tradition says that when the Buddha came to northern India (Uttarāpatha), he visited this country, and left behind him a 'foot-print'. ...... (His three companions) Hui-ching, Tao-cheng and Hui-ta now went on ahead towards 'Buddha's Shadow' in the country of Nagarahāra. "Fa-hsien and his other companions remained in this country for their summer retreat (probably rainy retreat?); and when that was over, they went down southwards to the country south of Uḍyāna and arrived in the country *Soo-ho-to* (i.e. Swat)."[2] The above description of Fa-hsien is an important record throwing light on the condition of Buddhism in Uḍyāna (i.e. the eastern part of the country; and as for the western

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1. *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, P.-50 ff. & pp. 157-158, respectively.
2. Giles H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, P.-11; Cf. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, pp. -XV, XXX) XXXI; Legge James : *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdom*, p. -29.

part, he calls Nagarahāra). He found the people following the Hīnayāna school of Buddhism with utmost zeal and devotion. He noticed several hundreds of monks residing in the monasteries. They used the Mid-Indian language, i.e. Sanskrit for their religious studies, which suggests that later Theravāda school (or Hīnayāna) was followed there, and the monks probably belonged to either Mahāsāṅghikas, or the other branches of this school, like Lokuttaravādin, Sarvāstivādin, Kāśyapīya, etc.; but certainly not the Early Theravāda. We know that these Later Theravāda schools have their literatures in Buddhist Sanskrit, (also called Hybrid Sanskrit). No doubt by the 4th century A.D. the Later Theravāda or Hīnayāna schools were firmly established in this area and people at large followed and practised this form of Buddhism.

From eastern part of Uḍyāna, Fa-hisen first went to Hadda, which he calls Hiro or Hilo, all alone as his other companions had already returned and left for China after venerating the sacred relics of the Buddha there. No doubt Hadda was regarded as the holiest among the holy places in Nagarahāra. Fa-hsien presents a detailed description of the place and records, "Travelling westward sixteen *Yojanas* (from Peshawar) he reached the frontier of Nagarahāra. In the city of *Hilo* (or *Hiro*) there is a shrine which contains Buddha's skull-bone-relic entirely covered with gold leaf and ornamented with precious objects. The king of the country deeply venerates the skull-bone, and fearing that lest it should be stolen, has appointed eight men of the leading families in the kingdom. They hold each of them a seal, with which to seal and guard the shrine and bone....... Every morning the king makes offerings....... afterwards transacts the affairs of the state......... The elders of the merchant class *(Seṭṭhis)* also first make offerings and then attend to their private affairs.......... In front of the gate to the shrine there will be found regularly every morning sellers of flowers and incense... The kings of the countries around about also regularly send envoys to make offerings."[1] The religious importance attached to Hadda was immense which can easily be understood. The people and the king all held the place as most sacred and paid their homage with great devotion and faith in Buddha and Dhamma and Saṅgha. The shrine of skull-bone-relic was the most sacred spot at Hadda and people used to visit this place in great number; and the sellers of flowers and incense also had their stalls on the shrine-gate.

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[1] Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hisen*, pp.15-17; Legge James : *Records of Buddhist Kingdom*, pp. 36-38.

In the capital Nagarahāra, Fa-hisen also visited certain other holy places, the most important being the 'Buddha's tooth-relic stūpa'. This stūpa was considered as sacred as the skull-bone relic shrine at Hadda. Here too he found people offering their homages with the same devotion and faith. This tooth-relic stupa has not yet been identified. Probably it stood at a place presently called Dauranta, which may be a derivative of *Dantadhātu* or *Dantārāma*. Many monastic caves, stupas and other monuments have been discovered from here. We will discuss about them later. Fa-hsien then paid his visit to another sacred place in the capital of Nagarahāra where' the Bodhisattva (Gotama before becoming Buddha) brought the silver money and some five stalked flowers for an offering to Dīpaṅkara.' From there he then went to venerate the place where the Buddha's pewter topped staff was kept. About four days' journey to the west of the capital he arrived at a shrine where one of the Buddha's robe was preserved. Half a *Yojana* to the south of the capital he went to visit a cave where the Buddha was said to have left his shadow on the rock inside. He also noticed there a stūpa some seventy or eighty feet in height, a 'model' for erecting a stūpa. Near it was a big monastery where over seven hundred monks dwelt and in which as many as a thousand big and small stūpas were erected in honour of Arhantas and Pratyeka Buddhas.[1] Probably this was the most important monastic establishment in the capital. The population of the monks was also quite large in this vihāra which suggests that it was quite large and extensive. Hundreds of stūpas were erected in the compound of this monastery which again indicates the antiquity of the vihāra, certainly built centuries before the Fa-hasien's visit to this place. It appears that probably it was the same *vihāra* which stood *'within'* the town, the Nagaravihāra, built first either by the Mahāsāṅghikas or by Aśoka for Thera Mahārakkhita, about which we have discussed earlier; and on account of which the town and then the whole country began to be called 'Nagaravihāra', which later contracted as 'Nagarahāra' by the time of Fa-hsien. The area near Chahar Bagh in Jalalabad may be the location of this monastery.

Fa-hsien stayed at Nagarahāra for some time but he however does not mention the name of any school of Buddhism that flourished there. We have seen earlier, he mentions that in the eastern part of the country of Uḍyāna, Hīnayāna school of Buddhism was followed and practised and several monasteries and hundreds of monks resided there. He probably found the same form of Hīnayāna school of Buddhism flourishing in the western part of Uḍyāna and in the capital, Nagarahāra and in Hadda and hence, he is silent on this point. Probably the Later Theravāda schools, such as Mahāsāṅghika, Viabhāṣika, Sautrāntrika, Kāśyapīya etc. had established their centres in this area and were popular in the public. The kings, nobles, rich merchants and the public at large had firm faith and devotion in this later form of Theravāda Buddhism. Perhaps Buddhism during Kaniṣka's period attained new dimensions in different aspects such as philosophy, literature and art which were in efflorescence by the time when Fa-hsien visited this country in early fifth century A.D.

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[1] Giles, H.A. : *Op. cit.*, pp.17-18; Legge, James : *Op. cit.*, pp.39-40.

Sung-yun visits Nagarahāra

Sung-yun was despatched to India by the emperor of northern Wei dynasty of China in search of Buddhist texts in A.D. 518. He was accompanied with another Buddhist monk, Hwe-sang. They followed the southern route from Tun-hwang to Khotan and then to northern India via Uḍyāna. It is recorded that they came first to the country of *Wu-chang* i.e. Uḍyāna, which joins to India on the south. There he found Buddhism in a flourishing condition. Sung-yun writes, "In the evening the sound of the bells (in the convents) may be heard on every side, filling the air (world); the earth is covered with flowers of different hues, which succeed each other in winter and summer, and are gathered by clergy and laity alike as offerings of the Buddha."[1] He also informs that the king of the country was a religious person and took only vegetarian diet. On the *Uposatha* days, he used to pay special adoration to the Buddha. The king was kind-hearted and even to a murderer, instead of allowing him to be killed, banishes him to the desert mountain out of piety and benevolence. Sung-yun met with the king and then the king, out of his religious mind and character, asked his companion, "Does your country produce holy men?" His companion Hwei-sang then replied, "Sages dwell there and is a land of persons with spiritual powers". The king then became overjoyed and exclaimed, "Truly yours is the land of Buddha, and I ought to pray at the end of the life that I may be born in that country."[2]

Sung-yun and his companion stayed in the town for about two years when they visited the sacred places of Buddhism. They went to the place where the Buddha is said to have dried his clothes when he came for the first time to *U-chang* (Uḍyāna). They also visited the trace of the shoe of the Buddha on a rock, some eighty *li* to the north of

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1. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* Introduction, p.-XCIV.
2. *Ibid.*, Introduction, p.-XCV.

the royal city. There they also noticed a tower to cover it. They visited some monasteries and a temple of *To-lo (?)* (Tara). They found there the monks observing the monastic rules assiduously and leading the life of 'eminent piety'. They also paid a visit to a temple erected on a mountain, about eight days' journey from the royal city to the north-east, called 'Collected Bones'. There lived some 300 or more monks. They also witnessed a stūpa built by Aśoka which was about 120 ft. in height.[1]

It is conspicuous to observe that the account of Sung-yun refers to his visit to *Na-ka-li-ho* or Nagarahāra in the last although he had visited almost all the sacred places therein. He went to venerate the 'skull-bone' relic of the Buddha at Hadda, which, he mentions, was of four inches round of yellowish white colour, hallow underneath (sufficient) to receive a man's fingure, shining and in appearance like a wasp-nest. He also visited a temple called *Ki-ka-lam* (?) where the robe and the staff of the Buddha were preserved. Sung-yun along with his monk companion also paid his homage to the place in the city of *Na-kie* (Nagara or Nagarahāra) where the tooth and some hair of the Buddha were preserved in a casket. They witnessed there people paying their offerings every morning and evening to these sacred relics of the Buddha. Probably, it was a spot somewhere near Dauranta, about which we have referred to above. He also went to see the 'place of Shadow of the Buddha' in a cave and calls it 'Gopāla'. According to his report, there existed some wall paintings describing the life scenes of the Buddha. Fa-hsien and Hiuen-tsiang also refer to the 'Shadow of Buddha'. "About one *Li* to the north of this cave," Sung-yun mentions, "the stone cell of Maudgalyāyana on a mountain." Probably there was a statue of Mahamaudgalyāyana in the cave. It is remarkable to note that neither Fa-hsien nor Hiuen-tsiang mention about this stone cell of Maudgalyāyana. Sung-yun also witnessed the stupa mentioned by Fa-hsien, which was supposed to have been made by the hands of the Buddha himself and which was 115 ft. in height erected in seven towers.[2]

The account of Sung-yun is important for the history Buddhism in Uḍyāna and Nagarahāra. He found the monks living in the monasteries assiduously observing the monastic rules. The people and the king of the country were zealously devoted to Buddhism. The sacred relics in and around the capital and other places were held in great esteem and reverence. Indeed Nagarahāra had attained great

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1. *Ibid.*, Introduction p.-XCVIII.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, p.-CVII.

religious importance because of several relics and places traditionally connected with the Buddha. Nagarahāra had attained so much importance that it became as sacred as any Buddhist place connected with the life of the Buddha in India. That there existed numerous places of religious importance indicates its great antiquity. It also supports our presumption that it was one of the earliest places in Afghanistan where Buddhism arrived quite early, probably before the Aśoka's period and continued to flourish among the people for centuries and received the patronage of all the kings who ruled this area. Because Buddhism remained as the faith of the people for centuries, erection of several edifices like stūpas and monasteries in and around the capital started to come into existence since long. Fabulous traditions and superstitions also began to be associated with several places where Buddha or his chief disciple Maudgalyāyana were believed to have visited, although no archaeological remains or antiquities referring to them are recovered from there. Surely the cultural and religious importance of Nagarahāra cannot be underestimated. It became such an important religious place that any Buddhist pilgrim coming to this side 'must' include in his visit the sacred places in Nagarahāra.

Hiuen-tsiang comes to Nagarahāra and Uḍyāna

Hiuen-tsiang, the famous Chinese Buddhist monk and scholar visited Nagarahāra in about 630 A.D.. He came to *Na-kie-lo-ho* (Nagarahāra) from Lampāka (Laghman) travelling 100 *li* south-east crossing a high mountain and a large river. He presents the accounts of the people and also the condition of Buddhism in this place. He informs, "The people are simple and honest, their disposition ardent and courageous. They think little of wealth and love learning, reverencing Buddha, having little faith in other religious systems." He noticed many Saṅghārāmas there but monks were very few. He also found five Deva temples (heretical, non-Buddhist probably of Śiva). The condition of the stūpas was not good, as he found some of them in ruinous state.[1] By his account it appears that Buddhism has rendered some set back, although people were honest and devoted. It seems that probably Ephthalites' or Hūṇas' invasion on this country created some devastations and destructions of ancient Buddhist sites. Probably during this unfortunate period of Hūṇa's rule some temples of Śiva, which Hiuen-tsiang calls 'Deva-temples' were erected since some of rulers of Hūṇas are supposed to be Śaivite. But the people however were not much attracted to this faith and they mainly followed Buddhism. The dilapidated condition of the stūpas that Hiuen-tsiang witnessed was probably rendered due to the persecutions done by these invaders in 6th century A.D.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-II, p.-91; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Chwang*, pp.-179-180.

Hiuen-tsiang paid his visit to a number of stūpas there. He mentions the one that was *'inside'* the town which was erected by Aśoka and which was 300 ft. high and beautifully adorned and built of stone. We have mentioned earlier that Sung-yun also visited this important stūpa. Hiuen-tsiang mentions that he saw two other stūpas which were also built by Aśoka. He went to the place where a stūpa, though in ruinous state, contained the tooth-relic of the Buddha, which was no more. He noticed there another 'votive stūpa' of 30ft. in height. This place may be identified with Dauranta *(Dantagṛiha)* near Jalalabad town about which we have referred to above. We have also mentioned earlier that Fa-hsien and Sung-yun also paid their visits to this sacred spot. He also went to the spot of 'Shadow of Buddha', which was earlier visited by the other two Chinese travellers who came before him to Nagarahāra.

Hiuen-tsiang presents a more detailed account of Hadda *(Hi-lo)* than the others. He describes *Hi-lo;* a 'town' of about 4 or 5 *li* in circuit. He mentions about five sacred relics which were preserved at different places there. The most important and highly venerated place was the skull-bone-relic (*Uṣṇīṣa*). The other four relics that he paid homage there were : (1) Another piece of skull-bone shaped like a lotus leaf; (2) One eye-ball of the Buddha' (3) The Saṅghāṭi (the upper garment) of the Buddha made of a very fine silky cotton stuff in yellow-red colour and (4) the staff of the Tathāgata with rings of white iron. The Buddha's skull-bone or Uṣṇīṣa was enshrined in a double storeyed tower; and the relic was kept in the upper storey in a small stūpa made of seven precious stones. The bone was one foot and two inches round in yellowish white colour.1 This area was ruled by the king of Kapiśa, but he had provided all protection and religious support to these sacred relics at Hadda. The king had commanded 'five pure-conduct men' to offer scents and flowers to these sacred objects. Hiuen-tsiang also tells about the wealth that was accumulated by several devices planned by these 'pure persons'. He says, "These 'pure' persons, observing the crowds that came to worship incessantly, wishing to devote themselves to quiet meditation, have established a scale of fixed charges with a

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1. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* Bk.-II , pp. 96-97; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang,* p.59; Watters ,T. : On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang , pp. 195-197.

view to secure order, by means of that wealth, which is so much esteemed by men. Their plan, in brief is this :- All who wish to see the skull-bone of Tathāgata have to pay one gold piece; those who wish to take an impression to pay five pieces. The other objects in their several orders, have a fixed price; and yet, though the charges are heavy, the worshippers are numerous."1 Hiuen-tsiang also adored these sacred objects with reverence and presented at different shrines fifty gold pieces, one thousand silver pieces, four silk banners, two pieces of brocaded satin and two sets of religious vestments.

Obviously these sacred relics were held in high esteem among the people who assembled there in crowds to venerate them without minding the heavy charges that were levied for their adoration. No doubt this state of affair points to a state of degeneration of the Religion as it involves lust for wealth which has no place in holy religious life. Lust or *Tanhā* for wealth has been much deprecated in Buddhism and even touching of a coin by a monk is forbidden in the Buddhist ecclesiastical code. But, as the time passed these vices crept into monastic society, which, of course, became one of the main causes of its downfall.

Hiuen-tsiang does not mention any monk-scholar residing in any of the monasteries that he visited nor does he refer to any monastery of significance for learning or practice of Buddhism in Nagarahāra as he had noticed in Balkh. Perhaps corrupt practices had led to degenerate the pure monastic life and spirituality, undermining the very essence of Buddhism. People by and large are prone to believe in superstitions and fabulous traditions, and they often fall a prey to exploitation by unscrupulous persons. The state of affairs that we find at Hadda, as described by Huien-tsiang, clearly points to a degenerated state of Buddhism. The 'pure persons' at Hadda who were made the custodians of the sacred relics by the king himself followed the evil means to accumulate wealth from the public. It appears that although Nagarahāra and Hadda and other places were taken into great esteem on account several sacred relics of the Buddha and pilgrims used to come to pay their homage out of devotion in large numbers but the pure monasticism and religious life had gone deviated and digressed from general code of morality. Nagarahāra had probably lost its pristine spiritual glory and ecclesiastical purity where once great saint-monks dwelt in the monasteries preaching and practising the *Dhamma* taught by the Great Master. Even the old name of the town and country,

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1. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-II, pp.96-97; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp.195-197.

Nagara-vihāra had lost its earlier full name and its significance and had become contracted to 'Nagarahāra', having no meaning at all. Although Buddhism was predominant, Hiuen-tsiang also noticed some five Deva temples of heretics with about 100 worshippers which again indicates the downfall of the Religion.

Hiuen-tsiang and Uḍyāna

We have discussed above Hiuen-tsiang's visit to the capital, Nagarahāra. In fact Hiuen-tsiang regarded *U-chang-na* i.e. Uḍyāna as a separate state from *Na-kie-lo-ho* i.e. Nagarahāra, probably because of physical divisions of the country, separated by lofty cliffs of the mountain of Safed-koh in the east; and perhaps, the two parts of the country were governed under two separate commandants appointed by the king of Kapiśa who was the ruler of this whole area during the time of Hiuen-tsiang. But, as a matter of fact both the divisions were the parts of the one and the same country, called Uḍyāna or Uḍḍyāna. Hiuen-tsiang describes the eastern division of Uḍyāna as extended upto the right bank of the *Sin-tu* (Sindhu) river. He also mentions the name of another river *Su-po-fa-su-tu* i.e. Suvāstu or Svāta as a great river of the country. He informs that there are four or five strong towns in the country; and Muṅgalī (Mod. Manglore) was its capital from where 'the kings mostly reigned'. Perhaps the main administrative headquarters of the whole country was transferred from Nagarahara to Muṅgalī and so the kings used to 'reign' from there. But Nagarahāra, however, continued to remain as a great religious place on account of a number of sacred relics therein.

The condition of Buddhism in Uḍyāna (i.e. eastern part), as described by Hiuen-tsiang, was not at all better than that of Nagarahāra, rather more degenerated. He informs that although people held Buddhism in high esteem, and many vihāras were there but no learned monks dwelt in them. He found the monks assiduously following the Vinaya rules but had no deep study of the religion. He says, "Although there are 1400 old Saṅghārāmas on both sides of the river *Su-po-fa-su-tu* (Svāta) but, they are now generally in ruins and desolate. Formerly there dwelt 18,000 monks in them but now only few remain. They are all Mahāyānīs and practise meditation at quiet places. The monks could recite the texts but have no knowledge of their deep meanings. They lead pure life according to monastic rules but also practise magical exorcism. Although they are Mahāyānīs, they follow the Vinaya traditions of five Hīnayāna schools, *viz.*, Saravāstivādins, Dharmaguptiyas, Mahisāsakas, Kāśyapīyas and

Mahāsāṅghikas."[1] From the above account of Hiuen-tsiang it is apparent that Buddhism had lost its pristine form and force. The monks, though pure in monastic life and also practising meditation, had become degenerated and believed in degraded practices like charms etc. They however claimed to be Mahāyānīs but they observed the Vinaya rules of the Hīnayāna schools, which were introduced long ago in that area. Perhaps the progress of transformation of the older schools of Buddhism into Mahāyāna was still in process and so, the monks were still adhering to the older Vinaya rules of the Hīnayāna schools. This also tends to suggest that the schools of Hīnayāna which were flourishing in the western part of Uḍyāna, i.e. in the Nagarahāra area, had influenced the Mahāyānī monks of the eastern part of Uḍyāna, as they used to follow the Hīnayāna Vinaya rules. We have referred earlier to the accounts of Fa-hsien who noticed only the Hīnayāna monks in Uḍyāna.[2] The destruction of the monasteries which were in several hundreds in number and all in ruins with fewer number of monks dwelling there was due to some great catastrophe that took place between Fa-hsien and Hiuen-tsiang (i.e. between 400 to 600 A.D.). We know that the Ephthalites or Hūṇas had created havoc when they raided the country in about early 6th century A.D. and are said to have rendered persecutions. Probably this eastern division of Uḍyāna was their main target. The monasteries and monks had to suffer much because of incessant devastations and persecutions caused by them. No other reason can possibly be attributed to it.

The monks to whom Hiuen-tsiang calls Mahāyānīs were probably neither true followers of Mahāyāna nor that of Hīnayāna Buddhism. They not only followed the Vinaya of different schools of Hīnayāna but also studied the scriptures of these schools. We learn from the *Life of Hiuen-tsiang* that the Chinese monk while on his way back home lost many of his manuscripts that he was carrying from India because of a storm while crossing a big river. The king of Kapiśa was then in *U-ta-ki-han-cha* (Utkhāṇda), hearing that Hiuen-tsiang had come, himself went to the river side to pay his respects and to escort him. The king took him to his capital, Kapiśa, where Hiuen-tsiang stayed for fifty days. The king in the meantime, knowing that the learned monk had lost his manuscripts in a storm in the river, despatched some persons to Uḍyāna for the purpose of copying out the Tripiṭaka of

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-III, pp.120-121; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp.64-65 and 192; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-126.

[2] Leege, J. : *A Record of Buddhist Kingdom*, pp.28-29; Giles, H. A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, p.-11.

Kāśyapīya school.[1] We know that the Kāśyapīya school is one of the branches of Theravāda or Hīnayāna school of Buddhism. In Uḍyāna, Hiuen-tsiang found only Mahāyānī monks in the monasteries and then, how could the king of Kapiśa arrange to procure the Tripiṭaka of the Kāśyapīya school from there? The only probable answer would be that either there were some Hīnayāna centres, which Hiuen-tsiang missed to visit and where dwelt some learned monks or that the so called Mahāyānī monks were still under the influence of the Hīnayāna schools and still studied the Hīnayāna texts. Possibly there existed some centres of other branches of Hīnayāna school besides the Kāśyapīyas. We have referred to above the other four branches of Theravāda school about which Hiuen-tsiang mentions. Probably Mahāyāna had just begun to take its root there and so, the other schools of Hīnayāna Buddhism, not completely overthrown, still held some in the country, and some centres were renowned for scriptural studies, and so the Kāśyapīyas' Tripiṭaka could be obtained for Hiuen-tsiang by the king of the country from there, though the members of Hīnayāna schools might have become less than before on account of the devastations caused by the Hunas; and so Hiuen-tsiang missed them to mention.

That Hiuen-tsiang saw some 1400 ruined viharas where once 18,000 monks dwelt in Uḍyāna points to the fact that Buddhism was not in a flourishing state. Perhaps because of great confusion and chaos created by the Hūṇas, the established Theravāda Buddhism suffered considerably. Even the true and pure religion seems to have become adulterated. The practice of magical exorcism which intruded in the monks' society shows to a degenerated state of Religion. It may however be pointed out that although the monks and monasteries of Uḍyāna had suffered a set back, the people by and large remained devoted to Buddhism and the Mahāyāna Buddhism had started setting its root in the eastern part of Uḍyāna.

I-tsiang's Account

Another Chinese pilgrim monk I-tsing, who visited India in later half of the Seventh Century A.D. (between 671-695 A.D.) has also left his travel account, which is of immense value for the history of Buddhism. Whether I-tsing himself came to Uḍyāna is doubtful, but he has mentioned its name and has described about the country, based on hearsay, of course not as an eye-witness.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-192.

I-tsing refers to the school of Āryamūlasarvāstivāda-nikāya which had three divisions, *viz.* Dharmagupta, Mahisāsaka, and Kāśyapīya. These schools never flourished in India, only some people followed them. But in Uḍyāna, Kharakar and Kustana these schools were flourishing.[1] We know that these schools were originally separated from the Mahāsāṅghika school of Buddhism, probably in Uḍyāna, and later, they became independent schools.

Although I-tsing did not come to Uḍyāna, he however got the above information from some traditional source. That Hīnayāna Buddhism was followed and practised in Uḍyāna and that some schools of it were prevailing there appears to be correct. We have earlier seen that some Mahāyāna centres were established in Uḍyāna when Hiuen-tsiang came to this country about three decades before him and some Hīnayāna schools also had their monasteries there, which is again confirmed by the accounts of I-tsing. Perhaps Hīnayāna school of Buddhism was followed and practised in Uḍyāna since its first introduction and more or less remained till the disappearance of Buddhism from there. Mahāyāna Buddhism however could not have much headway at any place in Afghanistan except in the eastern part of Uḍyāna and that also only at some places here and there. Later Theravāda Buddhism or Hīnayāna remained predominant throughout the history of Buddhism in this country.

Buddhist Monuments in and around Jalalabad

In modern Jalalabad (ancient Nagarahāra or Nagaravihāra or Udyānapura) is replete with ancient Buddhist Monuments which include several major sanctuaries, monastic establishments, stūpas, caityas and caves. Some of the monuments are of utmost cultural and religious value. Some stupas were erected to deposit the corporeal relics of the Buddha or Buddhist saints. Some of the cave-complexes, once the 'abodes' of great Buddhist mendicants are extensively carved. The caves of Baswal are large in number, some two hundred or so. The Dauranta cave-complex is important for its special design and largeness. Many monuments have yielded innumerable excellent pieces of art, in the form of icons, terracottas and stone reliefs. Hadda is world famous for its beautiful images of the so called Gāndhara art. So also, the stūpas at Hadda and elsewhere are erected in a decorative fashion. Several epigraphs, beginning from Aśoka till 9th century A.D., a large number of coins of the kings who ruled there and many such other important antiquities have been recovered from Jalalabad area. Because of a number of shrines which once contained the sacred relics of the Buddha, Jalalabad area became renowned as a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists who visited from distant countries like China, Korea or India throughout the ages.

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[1] Takakusu J. : *A Record of Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and Malay Archipelago,* p.-LIII

Many explorers, archaeologists and treasure-hunters have tried their luck by opening several stūpas and mounds of monastic establishments. Numerous cave sites have been identified and explored, but many still escape as unnoticed. Many Buddhist sites still await the spade of the archaeologists as they are unknown to us. In the following pages we will try to present a brief survey of some of the important Buddhist sites, explored or excavated by experts and scholars.

1. Chahar Bagh

About ten kms. or so to the west-south-west from the modern town of Jalalabad, on the right bank of the Surkhab river, at its junction with the Kabul river, there are numerous remains of ancient monuments, scattered over an area more than a mile and half. Some of the villages of this area still retain the ancient names, such as Begram (=Vihāragrama), Nagaraka or Nagara-goondi (reminiscent of Nagaravihāra or Nagarahāra) etc. Charles Masson was the first to make some explorations who carried some excavations but, of course, he was mainly engaged in searching treasures from there. Later, William Simpson also carried some excavations, rather more scientifically and attempted to identify the whole area of Chahar Bagh with the ancient town of Nagarahāra. He is rather firm in his identification. He writes, "The angle formed by the junction of the Kabul and Surkhab rivers where there are numerous remains of an old town of importance; and this is the site I propose for ancient city of Nagarahāra."[1] He, on talking the villagers, found the place calling 'Balla Hissar' or a 'Purānā-Shahar' or 'the capital of an old city'; and for the Buddhist monuments, their answer was invariably *'Kafir log ka'* i.e. 'of infidel people'.[2] He holds the view that 'Nagar Goondee' or 'the monuments of Nagar' is still existing on the very spot of ancient Nagarahāra. He opened there a stūpa of very large dimension. The stupa, he thinks, 'must have stood *within* the city'.[3] He also noticed the ruins of a vihara near the stūpa, which, we believe, was the same ancient vihāra after which the town came to called *'Nagaravihāra'* and later *'Nagarahāra'* on account of phonetic simplification.

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[1] *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.) Vol.-XIII. p.-184ff.

[2] *Ibid.*: p.-186

[3] *Ibid.*: p.-191

Charles Masson during his explorations noticed some 6 stūpas and 18 mounds, which he calls *'tumuli.*[1] Recently the Japanese archaeological team has been able to notice 25 mounds of ancient monuments.[2] While excavating these stūpas and *'tumuli'* Masson recovered one copper coin of Maues (from stupa No.-5), 28 coins of Kaniska (from stupa No.-4) and some other antiquities. Accordingly, some of the monuments there may be placed 1st or 2nd century A.D.. He also found some bone relics and ashes and fragments of charcoal kept in steatite vessels, usually enclosing small cylindrical vases with the cover of gold inside, from four out of six stūpas. Obviously these stūpas were the *Sārīrika* or bone-relic stūpas and the other two which did not contain anything were probably the *Uddeśika* or commemorative or votive ones. The Japanese team led by Professor Mizuno noticed the ruins of some vihāras near some of these stūpas. Some of them are small while others very large, measuring 40x50 mtrs. They consist of spacious living cells usually having small niches to keep lamps and books.[3]

The earliest date of the Chahar Bagh monuments, as we have shown above, may be placed in 1st or 2nd century A.D. on the basis of Mauses and Kaniṣka's coins; but since the area has not yet been fully excavated, we believe, the period of the monasteries may be pushed back when we can have full materials by excavating the whole area of Chahar Bagh.

2. Khwaja Lahoree Stūpa

Near Chahar Bagh, at a place called Khwaja Lahoree stands a huge mound of a stūpa. Masson when visited the place, noticed it one thousand eight hundred feet in circumference. The mound stands near the Kabul river and on the skirt, the village is nearby presently called Begrama (*=Vihāragrāma*). Masson also reports that people traditionally believe that there existed a town called 'Lahoree'. He also informs that coins, trinkets and other relics are found here generally at any time, particularly after the rains.[4] Professor Mizuno believes that by its direction and distance, this mound may be the stupa said to have been built by Aśoka at the site where Sumati, a young ascetic, having spread in the mud his deer skin and mantle and hair for Dīpaṅkara Buddha, received from the latter the prediction of Buddhahood. He refers to Fa-hsien and Hiuen-tsiang in relation to this story and determines this very site as Aśoka's stūpa.[1] It is worth mentioning here that there is another ancient site near there which still preserves the name of Aśoka, and presently called 'Aśoka Burgee' or 'Tapa Ashrak', about which we will discuss later. It is however immature, for want of definite evidences, to discern Khwaja Lahoree as the stūpa of Aśoka as suggested by professor Mizuno.

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[1] *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 100-104.

[2] Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p. -119.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[4] *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H. H. Wilson, P. -99; Cf. Simpson, *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIII (1880), pp. 188-189.

As this place falls under Chahar Bagh area, which is a probable site of Nagarahāra or Nagaravihāra, the huge mound however points to its a great cultural and religious importance which once it held.

3. Sultanpur Stūpa

About 15 kms. from the town of Jalalabad, near Kotpur, Masson excavated a stupa of considerable size, measuring one hundred eight feet in circumference. He exhumed from the stūpa a 'pyramidical ornament of steatite' vase which contained few ashes.[2] Professor Mizuno and his party recently made a survey of the place and found the ruins of a mud stūpa measuring about 10 mtrs. high and 30 mtrs. across. According to him this is another stūpa which was not recorded by Masson. By the ruins as noticed there he is convinced that the place is of much religious importance which Buddhists worshipped in the past.[3]

4. Barabad (or Baharabad) Stūpa

There stands a round stūpa on the barren hill of Barabad or Bahārābāda, obviously derived from the term *Vihārābāda,* so called because of the habitation that came up after the final destruction of a vihāra or vihāras that once existed in the past. The hill on which stūpa stands is not far from Chahar Bagh. Masson however calls this place 'the tope of Bar Robat'. He informs that the stūpa was opened by Honigberger who found a vase of steatite containing ashes.[4] South to this stūpa there lies another mound, which Professor Mizuno suggests to be the site of a monastery. He also suggests its probable date as 2nd century A.D. [5] Undoubtedly the Barabad stūpa and the monastery area were of some religious importance in ancient days, about which we know nothing.

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[1] Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p. -113.
[2] *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p. -89.
[3] Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p. -122-123. .
[4] *Ariana Antiqua,* Ed. H.H. Wilson, p. -88.
[5] Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), pp. 112

5. Nandara

Along the side of the Siah Koh, Masson noticed the remains of two stūpas. One of them is larger than the other, measuring 144 ft. in circumference. The stupa is well preserved on the south side while on the other three sides it is completely collapsed. It stood on a square plinth and on each side were the staircases. It was a beautiful stūpa, as Masson thinks. He gives its description thus, "The tope is embellished with splendid encircling belt, consisting of double lines of mouldings, in a succession of finely turned arches and pilasters." He also noticed a small niche which probably contained a statue, now destroyed. The stūpa was first opened by Honigberger and then excavated by Masson, who recovered a box of the bark of tree which had become so decayed as to crumble on being touched. The bottom of the box had disappeared. It contained some ashes and a piece of clay on which was the impression of two figures holding palm branches in their hands like Nania and Helio, the Greek deities. The bark casket was painted and also contained some 'tuz leaves' bearing some writings in 'Bactro-Pali' (Kharostī) characters. But these leaves were extremely difficult to be handled and to be read.[1] We believe the writings may have been the *Ye-dharmā hetuprabhavā......* formula or the *Paṭiccasamupada* formula, as noticed on many statues and other objects recovered from some stūpas, since it was the practice to inscribe for being the *'dharmadhatu'*. No coin was recovered from the stūpa and so, difficult to determine any date of it.

The other stūpa there appears to be an *Uddeśika* or commemorative or votive because when opened by M. Honigberger and later also by Mason, nothing was found from that. The ruins of some other stūpas and *'tumuli'* were also noticed by Masson.[2] Professor Mizuno also made a survey of the place and found the ruins of several stūpas, all in dilapidated condition, varying in sizes from 1.50 to 20 mtrs. in height and 500 to 1000 mtrs. in diameter. [3]

Nandara was certainly a place of some significance; and no doubt when the area is fully excavated, new materials may throw further light on its cultural importance.

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1. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 82-85.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.
3. Mizuno, S. : *Bawwal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), p. -116.

6. Deh-Rahman Stūpa

In the centre of a village near Jalalabad called Deh-Rahman, Masson excavated a ruined mound of a large stūpa measuring 108 feet in circumference. He discovered a small apartment from which was recovered a diminutive steatite vase containing a number of much corroded copper coins, so cemented together as to form one mass. Masson could verify none except one or two, which be calls 'of Hercules type'.[1] The coins may have been of Indo-Greek rulers.

He also opened another bigger stūpa which was 180 feet in circumference. Although in a dilapidated condition, decorative belt and massive mouldings, pilasters and concrete parts of the stūpa indicate its grandeur. Nothing could be recovered from inside the stūpa either by Masson or by earlier excavator Honigberger.[2] During the survey of this place Professor Mizuno also found the stūpas in poor condition.[3]

7. Bimran

Bimran appears to be one of the most important sacred places of Jalalabad area as from one of the several stūpas the relics of the Buddha, kept in an inscribed casket, have been recovered. In the very centre of the village stands a magnificient stūpa and in the neighbourhood of it Masson noticed the remains of four others.[4]

Bimran is situated six or seven miles west-north-west of modern Jalalabad town, which in ancient days, no doubt wielded much importance where Buddhist pilgrims used to come to pay their homages to the sacred relics enshrined there.

In the stupa No. -1, Masson found nothing, which was probably a votive stūpa. From the Stūpa No. -2, the bone relics, two Kharostī inscriptions, one on the lid and the other round the body of the vase were recovered. Both the inscriptions are more or less identical. It reads: *Sivarakṣit(r)sa Mu(n)Javada-put(ra)s danamuhe ṇiyadide Bhagavat(r)asarirehi Sambuddha(n) puyaye.* [Translation: "Gift of Śivarakṣita, the Munjavat scion, given in the substitution, for the relics of the Lord, in honour of all Buddhas"].[5] The vase contained a number of burnt pearls, beads of sapphire, crystals etc.. In the centre of the vase was a casket of pure gold; it had no cover. The circumference of the

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1. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p.-79.
2. *Ibid.*, p. -80.
3. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), p. -116.
4. *Ariana Antiqua*, Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 70-79.
5. *C.I.I.*, Vol. -II, pp. 50-52.

casket at the top and bottom was adorned by two lines of rubies (*Lālas*), twelve in each inserted at intervals. The centre body of the casket was embellished with eight human figures, including two Buddhas, each standing beneath the pointed arch flanked by Indra and Brahmā. Four copper coins of Azes were also deposited. The legend on the coins reads '*Maharajasa rajatirajasa dhramikas Ayasa*'.[1] It is remarkable to notice that the epithet *Dhramikasa* (Skt. *Dhārmikasya*) is an appellation exclusively borne by the Buddhist or Jain kings belonging to Śramaṇika culture. Aśoka is called *Dhammiko Dhamma-rājā*; so also Khāravela designates himself as Dharmarājā in famous Khandagiri Inscription. It may thus be inferred that Azes adopted Buddhism; and the erection of this stūpa may have been his edifice.

The embellishment of the gold casket with the rubies, sapphire and other gems and jewels not only point to the good economic condition of the country but also indicate the flourishing state of Buddhism there. Śivarakṣita, the son of Muñjavat, the donor of the relics is not known from any source. But, it is evident enough that Buddhism was a popular religion during this period. Probably this was the hey-day of Buddhism in Jalalabad.

From stūpa No.-3, Masson found a vase of steatite containing some burnt pearls, some ornaments, a handsome pagoda like ornament of pure gold, twenty seven copper coins of Soter-Megas and some other minor objects.

The stūpa no. -4 was also of a large size, one hundred eight feet in circumference. When opened, Masson recovered a silvered box, resembling the common steatite vases, which contained a small portion of ashes. Outside the box were found 17 beads of cornelian, agate, crystals etc. and six copper coins of Soter Megas.[2] Probably it was also erected almost by the same time as the other three stūpas. Since it was also a *Śārīrika* stūpa as it contained the relics or ashes of some saint or Arhanta Masson noticed as many as 12 votive *(Uddeśika)* stūpas around it, erected as offerings by the devotees in honour of the saint or Arhanta whose ashes were enshrined therein.

Little away from this stūpa, Masson opened another stūpa in a field which he designates Tope No.-5. It was also a large stūpa and local people call it 'Jani Tape'. Earlier, Honigberger had also opened it and recovered three steatite vases with carved covers. One of them

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1. *Ibid.* p. 50: Cf. *Ariana Antiqua*, pp. 70-71; Mizuno, S.- *Baswal and Jalalabad, Kabul*, p. 118.
2. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 74-75; Mizuno S.:"*Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, pp. 117-118.

contained some ashes mingled with burnt pearls, ornaments of gold, beads and a box of bark of tree and 31 copper coins. Masson also got 16 copper coins from this stūpa. Later he could get 52 copper coins from the villagers. In total 99 coins, divided into three categories:2 of Gondophernese, 8 of Soter Megas and 89 of Hermeus and Kujul Kadphises. Thus, the stupa may be attributed to the later half of the First century A.D.[1], the period when Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in this region.

8. Aśok Boorjee or Tapa Ashrak

Little north of Chahar Bagh, east of the bank of the Surkh Rud, a mound of large dimension was noticed by Masson which he calls 'Tapa Ashrak'.[2] It was also visited by Simpson who calls it 'Ashok Boorjee' and regarded it as the remains of some defensive works of ancient Nagarahāra town, not as a Buddhist site.[3] Nothing of importance was recovered from there. Only interesting is to notice the name of the Great Buddhist Emperor Asoka, is still surviving in the memory of the people. It is also interesting to observe that in Afghanistan it is not the only place connected with the name of Aśoka. We also find another village called 'Aśoka' near Kandahar.[4] It is also remarkable to notice that Aśoka's epigraphs have been discovered only from these two regions, Jalalabad and Kandahar, in Afghanistan. The edicts of Aśoka found from Jalalabad area, are three in number, two precisely from Laghman and one from Pul-e-Dauranta, near the town of Jalalabad. They are however fragmentary and written in Aramaic script and language. The two Laghman edicts are almost identical and may be the 'Minor Rock Edict', which Asoka got inscribed in his sixteenth year of coronation (i.e. C.253 B.C.). In these two edicts Asoka preaches non-violence and advocates vegetarian diets, free from fish or meat of animals. The Pul-e-Dauranta one is different from the above two and may be regarded as an abstract of the contents of his Pillar Edict-V & VII and Rock Edict XIV found elsewhere in India. It also refers to non-killing.[5]

The discovery of Aśoka's epigraphs from this region stands as a testimony to the fact that Aśoka took special interest in cultural and

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1. *Ibid.*,
2. *Ariana Antiqua* : ED. H.H.Wilson, P. -99.
3. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.) Vol. XIII, p.201.
4. Cf. Adamec L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol. -V, Kandahar, p. -60.
5. *B.S.O.A. S.*, Vol. -XIII(1949), pp. 80-88; *Indian Museum Bulletin*, Vol. -XV- 1 & 2, pp. 9-22; Cf. F.R. Allchin and N.Hammond: *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p. -192.

religious activities of this place. We have earlier discussed that Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra was a great stronghold of the Mahāsāṅghikas; and during the time of Aśoka, Mahārakkhita Thera arrived here to propagate Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda school of Buddhism, which Aśoka himself patronised. Aśoka provided all the facilities for the propagation of this School of Buddhism and probably a vihāra was erected near the town by him for Thera Mahārakhita and his party. He also built some stupas and other shrines there. Almost all the Chinese pilgrims invariably mention the stūpa of Aśoka in Nagarahāra. The present 'Aśoka Burji' or 'Tape-Ashrak' stands as the testimony of his cultural and religious activities that he carried out in this region.

9. Passani

Masson noticed two stūpas and fourteen small mounds or *'tumuli'* at a place called Passani, close to Bimran, near Jalalabad town. In fact Passani is not the name of the village but is the name of the *Kuchi* or nomads who live in the caves nearby during their winter migration to this place, as pointed out by Professor Mizuno, who has recently made a survey of the place.

Masson opened there two large stūpas which did not yield anything. He however found gold and silver boxes containing ashes, bones, beads etc. from some another small mound (tumulus No. -2). From there, he also recovered a *'tuz-leaf'* bearing some Kharosti writings and six copper coins of Azes.[1] Recently Professor Mizuno and his party collected a lot of lime and stucco fragments including Buddha, lion, elephant and other figures. The Japanese Archaeological team also opened some 'tumuli' or mounds and recovered ashes and bones from them. From Tumulus No.-5 when opened, a few copper coins of Azes family, probably of Soter Megas were discovered. In one of the tumuli (No.-7) a large apartment was noticed in which were deposited the entire bones of a corpse, save the skull.[2]

As a matter of fact what Masson describes *'tumuli'* were the ruins of the stupas since bones, ashes and some other objects have been recovered from them during recent excavations. Some of them were embellished with stucco figures, the specimens of which have been found by Professor Mizuno and his party. It is hoped, if proper exploration is made, ruins of monastic establishments may also be identified from this place. Passani was no doubt an important Buddhist centre which flourished in 1st century B.C. or 1st century A.D. It is very likely, Fa-hsien, Sung-yun, Hiuen-tsiang might have paid visits to this important Buddhist centre of Nagarahāra.

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[1] *Ariana Antiqua* : Edited by H. H. Wilson, p.-94.

[2] Mizuno S. :*Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto), (1971), p. -118; figure No. -35 on page-71.

10. Kotpur

Not far from Dauranta, Masson opened three large stūpas at a place called Kotpur. The stupa No.-1, as measured by him, was one hundred and sixty feet in circumference.[1] Professor Mizuno measured its height and found it 9 mtrs. He also noticed the plastered portions of the stupa, in its niches and dome.[2] No doubt it was a magnificient stūpa, well plastered and decorated. Honigberger opened it from one side and recovered three fragments of steatite and a silver box containing an 'unituous red fluid', but did not open it with a view to the conservation of the fluid. Masson also opened the stūpa from the other side but in vain, as nothing could be recovered from that.[3]

The other stūpa No.-2 was found in a dilapidated condition when Masson visited it. He opened this stūpa and found a cylindrical box of steatite, with ornamented cover, within which was a smaller silver box containing a small portion of ashes, an impression of a seal and a clay with Greek letters 'Baselios', a standing figure of the king, a small circular silver piece, two gold ornaments and a gold bead. He also recovered ten copper coins inside the box, which bear Herculeus figure on the reverse (Probably of Menander).[4]

The third stūpa which Masson opened stood about a mile away from stūpa No.-2 on the bank of the Surkh river. This stūpa was also erected over the relics of some Buddhist saint whose bones and ashes were recovered from it when opened by Honigberger and later by Masson too.[5]

The antiquities found from Kotpur evidently suggest that it flourished as a great Buddhist centre during the Indo-Greek period or even earlier, in about 1st century B.C. or 1st century A.D.

11. Surkh Tope

Near Nandara stupas, Masson noticed a large stūpa on the slope of Siah-Koh, which local people call Surkh tope. He also noticed other four *'tumuli'* of considerable size near it. While inspecting the site he

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1. *Ariana Antique.* p.94.
2. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, p.-119.
3. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 64-65.
4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p.-66' also Plate V-8,9.
5. *Ibid.*, p.-66; Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), p.-119.

picked up a copper coin which he could not identify but regarded the symbol on it as that of Azes family.[1] This stupa also appears to belong to the same period as the others in this area, of about 1st century B.C.

12. Dauranta

Just across the Kabul river on the opposite of the present town of Jalalabad are the remains of cave-monasteries, stūpas and other shrines of great importance at a place called Dauranta. The importance of the place can easily be understood by the fact that a broken tablet containing fragmentary edict of Aśoka was discovered from the neighbourhood, Pul-e-Dauranta about which we have earlier discussed. It appears that the present name of the place, 'DLaurantā' is a derivative from the word *'Dantagarabha'* or *'Dantagriha'* or *'Dantagarbhgṛiha'*, where the tooth-relic or *Danta-dhatu* of the Buddha was enshrined. Fa-hsien visited the capital Nagarahāra in the beginning of 5th century A.D. and mentions, "Here too, in the city is a Buddha's Tooth-Pagoda, offering being made in the same way as for the skull-bone" (at Hadda).[2] Sung-yun, another Chinese traveller who visited Nagarahāra in early 6th century A.D. (c. 518 A.D.) describes that "in the city of *Na-kie* (Nagarahāra) is tooth of the Buddha and also some of his hair, both of which are contained in precious caskets; morning and evening religious offerings are made to them".[3] Hiuen-tsiang also visited Nagarahāra in about 610 A.D. and mentions, about "a great stūpa 'within the city' which was in ruined foundation, which once contained the tooth of the Buddha; and that it was high and of great magnificence. Now it has no tooth, but only the ancient foundation remains."[4] Probably, by the time of Hiuen-tsiang, the tooth-relic of the Buddha was removed to elsewhere and distributed to more than one places. Hiuen-tsiang witnessed one tooth-relic of the Buddha some 200 *li* south-west of the 'sleeping figure of the Buddha' (at Bamiyan). He also informs that in that very Saṅghārāma the tooth of a Pratyeka Buddha was also preserved.[5] The other tooth-relic of the Buddha that Hiuen-tsiang saw was enshrined in a vihāra near Kapiśa. About this, he records, "To the north-west of the capital (Kapiśa) there is a large river. On the southern bank of which, in a convent of an old king, there is a milk tooth of 'Sakya Bodhisattva'. It is about an inch in length."[1]

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[1] *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p.-96, Plate-VIII-1; Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, p.-119.

[2] Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, p. -17; Legge, J. : Op. cit., p.-38.

[3] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, p. -CVII.

[4] *Ibid.*, Bk. -II, p. -92.

[5] *Ibid.*, Bk.-I, p.-52.

The stupa containing the tooth-relics of the Buddha, was witnessed by Fa-hsien and Sung-yun and as also informed by Hiuen-tsiang that once the tooth-relic was enshrined in a stūpa in the town of Nagarahāra. It may be identified with the stupa that presently stands near the Philakhana at Dauranta, noticed by William Simpson.[2]

The antiquities and monuments found from Dauranta, clearly point it to be a place of great religious significance. In Dauranta. there are a number of ancient stūpas and cave monasteries of large dimensions. Honigberger and Masson opened some of the stūpas and mounds and collected coins and antiquities. Masson observes, "The essential deposit (in the stūpas and tumuli) has been found to be a small fragment of bone or a minute portion of ashes." He also further says, "No tope is without its accompanying tumuli".[3] Usually a *Śārīrika* stūpa (Relic stūpa), being a place of veneration is adored with the stūpas constructed around by the devotees out of veneration. Such a stūpa is known as *Uddeśika* i.e. 'votive' or 'commemorative'. The stupas of Dauranta, as Masson observes, contained the deposits of Buddhist saints or Arhantas (i.e. *Śārīrika* stūpas) and so near them, the remains of the *Uddeśika* or votive stūpas exist which contained nothing at all. Masson calls them 'small Tumuli.'

Masson considered some of the mounds of Dauranta as insignificant; but when they were opened later, bones or ashes were recovered from them. The so called 'tumuli' are numerous in Dauranta and Masson observes, "They principally occur grouped and are found usually behind topes, never to the front or east of them, corroborating that these structures fronted in that direction, as indicated by analogy and confirmed by the occasional presence of niches."[4] Some of them were the bone-relic stūpas, while others were the commemorative or votive ones, the offerings to the formers.

Sometime later William Simpson also made a survey of the ruins of the stupas; and recently, Professor Mizuno along with his party has made a detailed survey of the caves of Dauranta and has published the report.[5] In all, he examined 31 caves; and some of them are of considerable interest for the history of Buddhism and also for the study of cave structural art. Some of them are extensively large. The most

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1. *Ibid.*, Bk-I, p.-67; Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang*, p.-128.
2. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), (1882), Plate-4.
3. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. Wilson, p.-90.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
5. Mizuno, S. : *Hazar Sum and Fila-Khana*, (Kyoto) (1967), p. 68-77.

interesting cave is known as Phīla-khānā (or Elephant House) for being so large in size as to be sufficient to house an elephant. Simpson noticed one cave near Phīlakhānā (No. -6), finely built and compared its structural art with the rock-cut vihāras of Western India; while others, he found 'rudely formed'.[1]

On the west side of the high cliff overhanging the Kabul river, there is a large niche, first noticed by Simpson, in which there had been a colossal figure of the Buddha at a time, but now no remains of it are visible as it might have been made of mud covered with the coating of *Cunam.* For connecting the caves a large tunnel of 12 or 13 feet wide has been cut for communication; and it has since been called 'Bazar' by the local people. Simpson also noticed numerous stūpas and the ruins of vihāras scattered about a mile and half distance.[2] Certainly, this area appears to be a very important centre of Buddhism where Buddhist monks dwelt and practised Buddhism in the past.

Phīlakhānā-Stūpa or Gudāra Stūpa

Above the Phīlakhānā caves, among many mounds and ancient remains, there is a large stūpa of about 13 mtr. in height. There is a large square niche, about 15 or 20 feet high, which once contained a large standing statue of the Buddha, which could be seen from south and west sides as the niche has the opening to both the sides.[3] This stūpa was opened by Masson, who calls it 'Tope Gudara'. He recovered from there a silver casket, which enclosed a similar smaller one of pure gold. Within the golden casket was some reddish brown substance, two or three beads, a mother of pearl-shell and a fragment of bone. The squares of slate-stones in which these were recovered, on the sides and bottom were covered with leaf-gold, and the upper slate was alternated with squares of leaf-gold and lapis-lazuli colour.[4]

No doubt, the stūpa contained the relics of some Arhanta or even of the Buddha. Unfortunately the casket does not bear any inscription and so, it is difficult to discern anything. But, it is an important stūpa of the area and on the summit, there are bases of stone walls, which suggest the foundation of a monastery which once stood there.

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1. *J.R.A .S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIV (1882), p. -324.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.
3. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIV (1882), p. -327; Cf. Mizuno, S. : *Hazar Sum and Fila-Khana*, p.-77.
4. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p. -87, plate No. -IV.

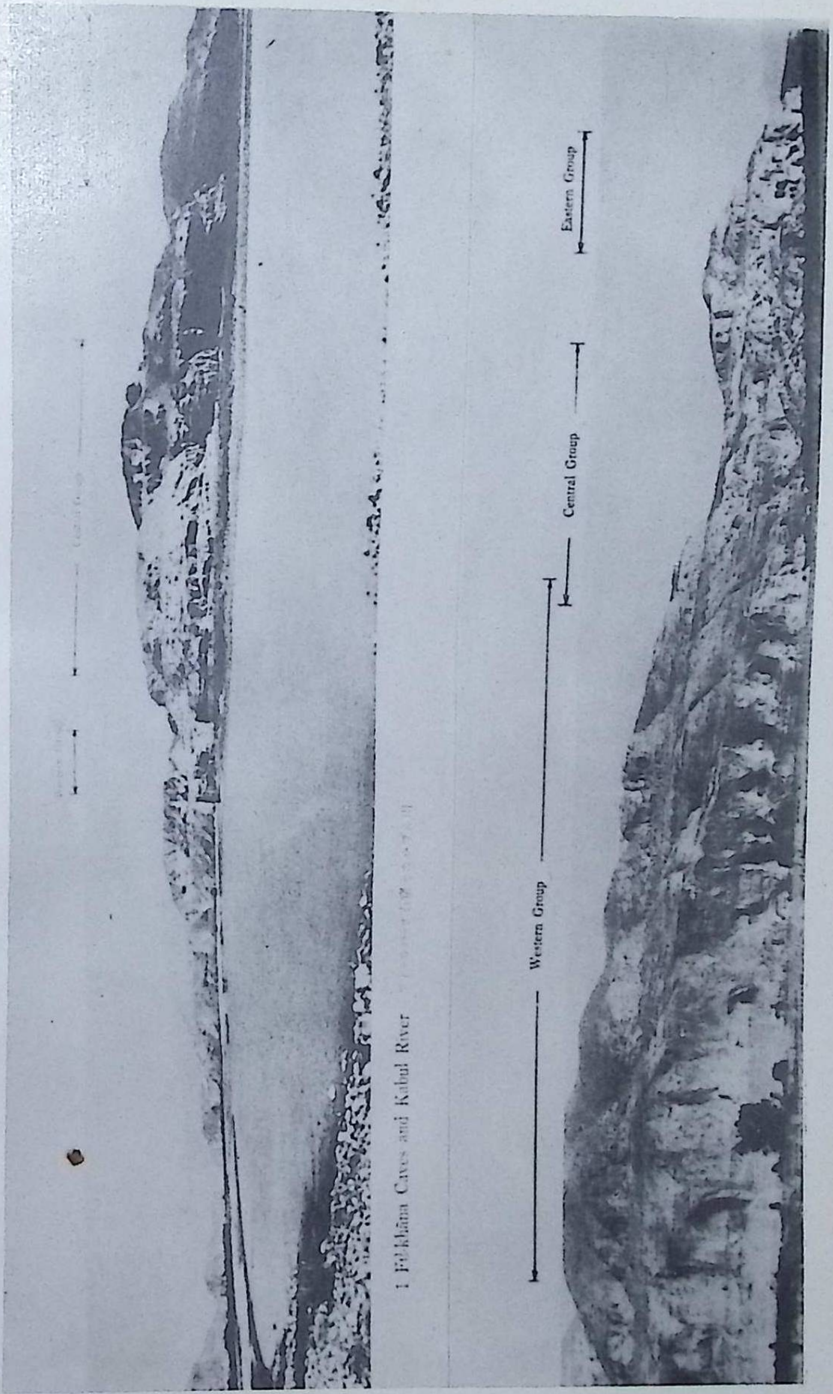
1 Fīlkhāna Caves and Kabul River
Eastern Group
Central Group
Western Group

Figure 1 *Jalalabad:* Philakhānā Caves.

Date of Dauranta Caves

In cave No. -28, Professor Mizuno noticed some sort of inscribed writing in Kharostī style, though not legible. He is of the opinion that the caves of Dauranta may be dated to Kusana period c. 200 A.D. or so. Thus, the Phīla-khānā caves may be regarded as one of the earliest Buddhist caves in Afghanistan.[1] Professor Mizuno may be correct in suggesting a date of the caves, but he has not assigned any probable date of the stūpas, so important and large in number there. We believe that the erection of the stūpas may be placed much earlier than the caves. It is very likely that some *vihāras* or *kuṭīs* were first established for the monks on plain surface of the rock and later some shrines and stūpas came into existence. The caves were carved out certainly later than the vihāras or even the stūpas. When the population of the monks increased there, caves were cut for their residence, particularly for the winter season. Some big cave halls were also dug for the purpose of *Uposatha* and other ecclesiastical ceremonies, like *Pavāraṇā* etc. collectively. It is very likely that some of the stūpas were erected earlier than 1st century B.C., and probably some of them might have been created by Aśoka who is so well-known for such religious acts. Chinese travellers witnessed the stūpas erected by Aśoka that we have referred to earlier. One of the edicts of Aśoka was discovered from Pul-e- Dauranta itself, which again points to this possibility. And, if our presumption be taken into account, some of the stūpas may be attributed to Aśoka. The Buddhist remains of Dauranta in the form of caves, monasteries, *Śārīrika-stūpas* (corporeal relic stūpas) and several *Uddeśika-stūpas* around them suggest that the monastic establishments at Dauranta came into existence perhaps a few centuries before Christ, some even during the Aśoka's period and some during the Kuṣāṇa days. Because of these sacred monuments it became a place of veneration for the Buddhist pilgrims who used to visit this place when coming to Nagarahāra.

13. Khugyani

Not far from Jalalabad there lie some ancient remains in a village called Khugyani. I have had the occasion to visit the place and there I noticed the remains of a monastery on the flat level over a ridge overhanging a small rivulet which passes by. No proper exploration of the place has yet been made; but some time ago 12 bent bar silver coins have been found from there which are now in the National Museum, Kabul. These coins are supposed to have been of 4th century B.C., the last century of the Achaemenian rule in Afghanistan.[1] The Buddhist remains of the place leave no doubt to be a site of monastery which probably belonged to the Hīnayāna school of Buddhism. The present name of the place, 'Khugyāni' may be a derivative of the term *Khuddayāni* (Skt. Kṣudrayāni), i.e. 'Lesser Vehicle'. If a thorough exploration of the place is carried out, Buddhist antiquities of early period may be discovered.

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[1] Mizuno, S. : *Hazar Sum and Fila-khana,* p-77.

14. Kajitulu Caves

Besides the Phīla-Khānā caves, there are some ten caves dug in a hill about 2 or 3 kms. away from Jalalabad town. The caves were hewn out of the rock for the purpose of monks' cells. In the centre of these caves, one large cave is cut which is remarkable in its construction as it has a central pillar. This large one was probably meant for congregational purposes. The caves are located at a secluded place and ideally suited for spiritual practices and meditation. The caves are cut along the river side which provided natural surrounding besides meeting the water purposes of the resident monks.[2]

15. Siah-Koh Caves

Recently Professor Mizuno and his party have made an exploration of the Siah-Koh on the western mountain of the Jalalabad valley and noticed as many as 14 caves which were dug for the 'abodes' of the Buddhist monks. On the northern side of the mountain there is a group of 8 caves (Group - A) while on the western spur are 4 caves (Group - B), further west lie 4 another caves. Some of them are vaulted and oblong and are paved with mud-bricks. These caves are connected with a tunnel. Some of them are pillared and firmly paved with mud-bricks, while others are square with plain ceilings.[3] The oblong rooms may have served as the guest rooms and square ones were probably meant for individual dwellings.

16. Allahnazar Caves and Stūpa Mounds

About 10 kms. south of Sultanpur, a place not far from Jalalabad, on the south bank of the Arwa river, there are some 30 caves in bad condition, much eroded. Some of them are provided with mud-brick-walls rising from the mud-bolder basements. These caves were dug for individual monk's dwellings.

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1. Allchin F. & Hammond N. : *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p. -203.
2. Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), p.-123.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-124.

Not far from these caves, on the barren plateau, there lies a mound with the piles of boulders, which was probably a stūpa. The ruins of a monastery were also noticed by Professor Mizuno and his party. The wall-lines of some kind of building are still surviving and they are probably the remains of a monastery. A spring at the bottom of the river was created by cutting a square hole into natural rock to serve as a source to perennial water supply for the monks who resided there.[1]

17. Baswal Cave-Complex

While Bamiyan is the largest cave-complex where some twenty thousand caves were hewn out of the rock, Baswal is probably the next largest one where some one hundred fifty caves still exist. Baswal is a village situated about 50 kms. south-east of Jalalabad, on way to the Safed-Koh or Khaibar-pass. On the opposite, left bank of the Kabul river, there is a hill called 'Koh-be-Daulat', that is 'Worthless Mountain' because of being barren, devoid of any plant. There are three small villages, namely, Bela, Samecha and Chiknur. These caves are extended over 3.5 kms. along the bank of the Kabul river.

William Simpson was first to visit this place, and he found some one hundred caves in the village Chiknur. He found many of these caves inhabited by the Kuchis or nomads who kept large flocks in them in the winter and moved in the summer. On account of their habitation not only the plaster on the walls is destroyed but have become so blackened with soot that no inscription, painting or colour of any kind, once existing, presently to be visible. He thinks that many of them were no doubt painted as he noticed a few remains of them.[2]

Recently Professor Mizuno along with the members of the Kyoto University (Japan) Archaeological Mission has made a detailed survey of these caves and has published a volume. The total number of the caves, as according to their calculation, comes to 150, which have been grouped into eight, according to their distribution at different places, the largest number in Group-A, numbering some 54 caves. The caves of Baswal are constructed in a variety of forms, and often they are connected by various stone constructions on the exterior, though the character of these stone structures is not obvious at present. The Japanese team also noticed, near the caves (in the area Group-C), a good number of red pottery sherds, littered on the surface; and they picked-up the figurine of a Buddhist monk or a worshipper clasped in

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1. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), (1882), pp. 319-324; Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, p. 124.
2. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.) (1882), pp. 319-324.

prayer,[1] which suggests them as the Buddhist cave monasteries. The caves are cut in a variety of sizes and shapes. Some are square type, some oblong with vaulted ceiling and some pillared or circumbulatory type, a circumbulatory hall with vaulted ceiling and a central pillar. Obviously the square type of caves were meant for the individual dwellings and the oblong ones probably served as the guest-rooms or dormitories and the pillared circumbulatory halls were no doubt used as *Uposathāgāras* or congregational halls where the Saṅgha used to meet and conduct ecclesiastical businesses. Some of these halls still have decorative arches in which smaller holes are visible indicating that they were once holding figures of the Buddha. In some of the arches red paintings are still visible though blackened with soot. Some of the walls, though terribly coated with black soot, indicate that originally they were decorated with beautiful frescoes. Some obscure outlines of the paintings were also observed on the walls by Professor Mizuno and his party.

While digging some of the ruins in Baswal, at one site (room No. I), six pots were found. On the floor a number of potsherds and a few iron nails were also recovered. It is interesting that four potsherds bear Kharosti writings, all fragmentary, one of them mention " (Donation) to the Saṅgha of the four quarters" (*Catudisasa Sanghasa Danam*),[2] suggesting the common property of the Saṅgha.

The excavations of the shrines have also yielded some other finds, such as, stucco heads of the Buddha, heads of the Bodhisattvas, some decorative heads etc. In one of the shrines (No.-1) a figure of standing Buddha in Gandhāra style is found *in situ;* and at another, one of the feet of the Buddha.[3]

Date of Baswal Caves

The date of Baswal caves and other monuments, as Professor Mizuno remarks, may be placed in about 400 A.D. on the basis of the Gandhāra art manifested on the sculptures and stucco figures found from there and also suggested by the typographical characteristic of the caves which is in resemblance more to the Indian tradition than the Iranian, as noticed in the Bamiyan caves. The Baswal caves and other monuments may therefore by placed to a date towards the later fourth or early fifth century A.D.[4]

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1. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p.-102.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 108, 109; Plate Nos.-5 to 7, 23.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 106-109, Plates 17, 18, 19, 20 and 22.
4. *Ibid.*, p.-111.

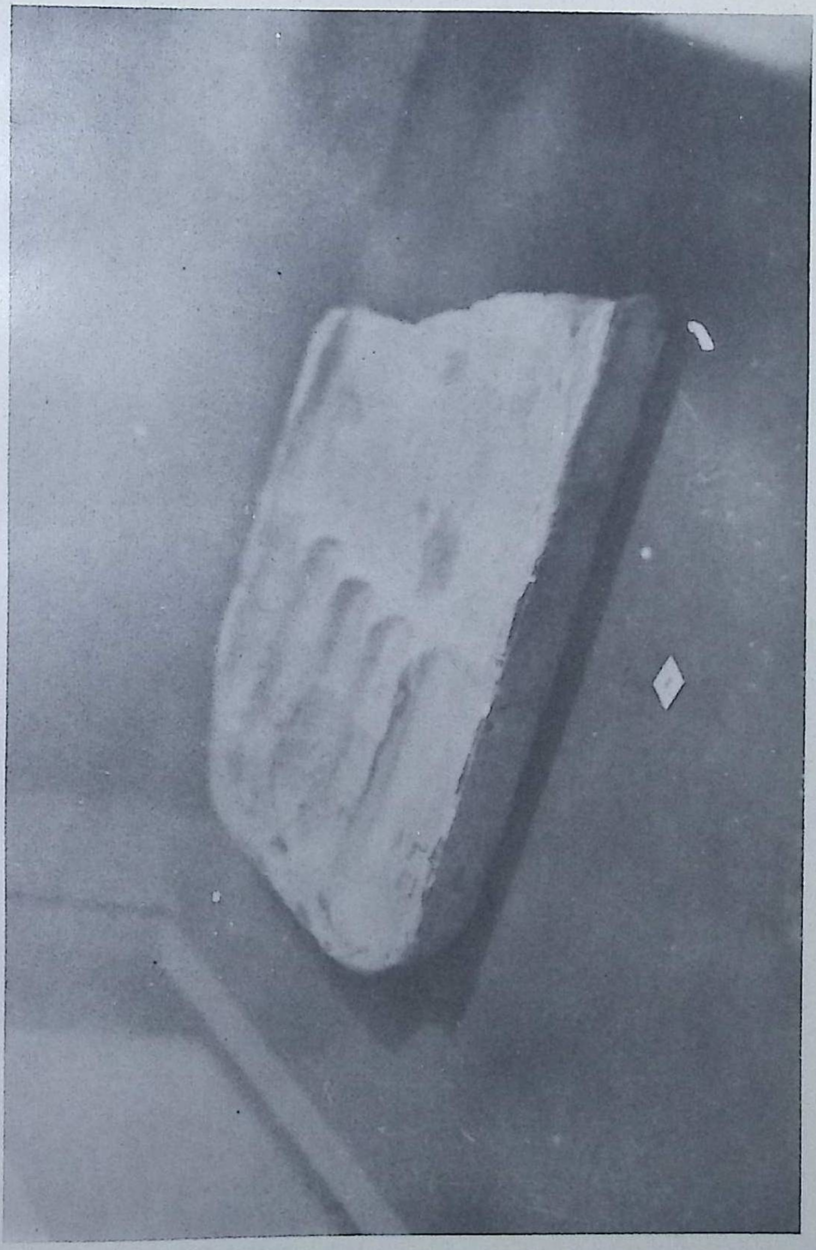

Figure 2 *Jalalabad:*
Foot-print of Buddha with Svastika Symbol (in Schist)
[Kabul Museum] (Kama Daka).

It is surprising that such a big monastic complex established at Baswal, as early as 400 A.D., remained unnoticed by pilgrims who visited Jalalabad area, the ancient Nagarahāra, where Buddhism was flourishing centuries earlier. Why this place escaped from their notice is difficult to point out. Probably no sacred relic was enshrined there. The pilgrims who visited Nagarahāra or Hadda remained engaged in visiting numerous important sacred Buddhist sites in and around Nagarahāra. Baswal being located little away from Nagarahāra and that also on the opposite bank of the Kabul river, the pilgrims could not include these places in their visits. Baswal caves were probably the temporary 'abodes' of the monks of Bamiyan who used to reside this place only during the winter season for Bamiyan being inclemently bitter while this place being less cold. In other seasons probably it remained desolate and only a few resided there throughout the year. Pilgrims visiting Nagarahāra had therefore no attraction for the place; perhaps no learned resident monks nor any sacred object where there. But one fact is obvious by the finds discovered from Baswal that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in this area.

18. Hadda

Perhaps Hadda was the most important sacred Buddhist place, not only of the Nagarahāra area, but of Afghanistan as a whole. All the pilgrims who came to this side invariably used to pay their visits to this place to adore the sacred relics enshrined there, particularly the skull-relic of the Buddha. Some travellers have left the description of this place and have spoken much about this place with great esteem and admiration, giving more details about it than the other sites of Nagarahāra. The antiquities and the monuments discovered from there exhibit its cultural and religious importance which it held in the past. The monuments from there include some 44 stūpas, several temples and shrines, caves and monasteries, all scattered on a four mile long barren hills. Besides several inscribed materials, Hadda is world famous for the icons carved out in the so called Graeco-Indian style. These images are not only the excellent pieces of art but they also reflect the interaction of cultural dimensions that took place between Buddhism and Hellanism in ancient times.

Hadda is situated about 5 miles south of modern town of Jalalabad and can be visited by any vehicle throughout the year. No record is available which can throw light on the early history of Hadda, nor do we know as to why and how it rose to such an important place where several sacred relics of the Buddha were deposited. We are also not in a position to know about the pious person or the great Buddhist king who may be credited with to raising it to such an important sacred place for the Buddhists, away from the capital, Nagarahāra. We will however discuss below about its cultural and historical importance.

The earliest antiquities recovered from there include a square copper coin of Hermeus (c. 50-30 B.C.) along with some coins of Gondopherenes and Azes I, deposited in a stūpa (No.-3), which was opened by Masson.[1] From another stupa, Masson also recovered the 'tuz-leaf' bearing the 'Sermon of Sarnath', written with ink in Kharostī script from one of the stupas (No.-1) there.[2] A jar containing the relics of the Buddha with Kharostī inscriptions in two lines was also found by him from another stūpa of Hadda (stupa No.-13). This inscription is dated year 28 and supposed to be of 29 B.C.[3] These numismatic and epigraphical materials point to the fact that Hadda developed as a sacred Buddhist place quite early at least by the 1st century B.C. It may not be unreasonable to presume that in the beginning a *vihāra* or an *ārāma* was established by some monk-saint or by some king, one or two centuries before Christian era, which formed a nucleus to develop Hadda as a great sacred place of pilgrimage in later days.

Fa-hsien is the first Chinese monk who presents the account of Hadda, where he went to pay his homage to the sacred skull-relic of the Buddha. He visited the place in about 410 A.D. and calls the place 'Hilo.' He records, "Going 16 *yojanas* (from Peshawar) reached the country of *Na-kie* (Nagarahāra). On the borders, in the city of Hi-lo (Hi-ro) is the vihāra which contains the skull-bone of Buddha, entirely covered with gold-leaf and ornamented with the seven precious substances." His three other monk companions, Hui-ching, Hui-ta, and Tai-ching had previously gone to this place to offer their homage to this sacred object.[4]

Sung-yun is the next Chinese traveller monk who came to this place C. 518 A.D.. and whose account about Hadda is also recorded in ancient Chinese records. The Record of Tao-yung which contains his account, informs that at *Na-ka-lo-ho* (Nagarahāra) there is a skull-bone of the Buddha, four inches round, of yellowish-white colour, hollow

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1. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p.-104. For Hermeus chronology see W.W. Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p.-326; A.K. Narain: *The Indo-Greeks*, p.-157.
2. *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, pp. 157-158; *J.A.S.B.*, Vol.-XXXII (1883), p.-144; *MDAFA*, IV. p. 63; *Ariana Antiqua* Ed. H.H. Wilson, p. -106.
3. *C.I.I.* Vol.II-pp. 157-158.
4. Giles, H.A. : *Travels of Fa-hsien*, pp. 14-15; Legge, J. : *A Record of Buddhist Kingdom*, pp. 36-37; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, p. -XXXIV.

underneath, (sufficient) to receive a man's finger, and in appearance like a wasp-nest."[1]

The most learned and renowned Chinese monk, Hiuen-tsiang has left a better and detailed description of Hadda. He visited there to pay his homage to the sacred relics. He writes, "To the south-east of the city (Nagarahāra) 30 *li* or so is the town of *Hi-lo,* 4 or 5 *li* in circuit; it is high in situation and strong in declivities........ There is a two-storied tower; the beams are painted and the columns coloured red. In the second storey is a little stupa made of seven precious substances; it contains the skull-bone of Tathāgata; it is one foot two inches, round the hair orifices are distinct; its colour is a whitish yellow, which is placed in the middle of the stūpa."[2]

Raja Udi or Hoda

Masson informs a tradition assigning the name of the place after the name of king Hoda or Udi of the country. He informs that the largest cave of this place is called 'Place of Hoda Rajah'. And hence the place is called after his name Hidda or Hadda.[3] But it is worth mentioning that the king of Udi is referred to the king of Uḍḍyāna, as is evident from an inscription of later date of a Hindu Shahi king in which he is described as *Odyataśāhī.*[4] General Cunningham on the other hand thinks that it was a place of renowned sanctity and Hidda may be only a transformation of *Haḍḍa,* a bone, as the stūpa of the skull-bone of Buddha. And so, *Fa-ting-ke-ching,* is only a Chinese translation of 'Buddha's skull-bone town'. And the place which contained the skull-bone of Buddha would most probably have been known by the familiar name *Asthipura* among the learned, and of *Haḍḍipura* or 'Bone-town' among the common people.[5]

We however believe that Hadda is a derivative of the Sanskrit word *Hrada* (Pali *Daha*) meaning a tank or a water pool. Very likely there existed a water pool or a tank of considerable importance. Simpson observes that there can still be seen the remains of a rock-cut *Karaise* (water pool) which is now waterless.[6] It is remarkable to note that *Pokkharaṇī* or tank is one of the buildings of an *ārāma* (monastic establishment) as allowed by the Buddha for the monks if offered by a

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1. Beal, S. : *Ibid.,* Introduction, p.-CVII.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* pp. 95-96; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang,* p.-59
3. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p.-105; Cf. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol.-XIV, (1882), p.-329.
4. *E.I.,* Vol.-XXXV, pp. 44-47.
5. Cunningham, A. : *A.G.I.,* pp. 38-39.
6. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIII (1881), p. -194.

lay-devotee.[1] We have found the remains of such tanks mostly near the monasteries in India.[2] A tank or water pool was constructed at Hadda by some lay-devotee to meet the water purposes of the monks. Probably it was the only water reserviour of the place and by the passage of time the place came to be known as *Hrada* or *Hadda*. Many ancient place-names in Afghanistan still retain their ancient names such as Samagan for Samaṇagāma (Skt. Śramaṇagrāma), Begram for Vihāragrāma, Nagarahāra for Nagaravihāra, Kandahar for Skandhāvāra etc. So also, Hadda is derived from *Hadda* or *Hrada*. We know several names which end with *Daha* (tank), for example, Devadaha, Navadaha (or Navādā) etc.

Monuments and Antiquities of Hadda

The Buddhist monuments and antiquities discovered from Hadda are abundantly copious. Numerous stūpas of different dimensions - large, medium and small - are to be seen in the area. Some of them have yielded the corporeal relics of the Buddha deposited in inscribed caskets and some contain only bones, certainly of some Buddhist saints, if not of the Buddha himself. The monuments of Hadda also include the ruins of several monasteries, temples, shrines, caves etc. Hadda has also become renowned for its classical Gandhāra sculptures and icons recovered in large numbers from different sites. The antiquities recovered from there number in thousands, some still *in situ* while others housed in Muse de Guimet, Paris and National Museum, Kabul, the latter possessing no less than thirteen hundred. It is remarkable to note that the sculptures of Hadda are composed of a relatively small number of carvings in schist and limestone, rather a vast quantity of material is found in stucco or lime plaster.[3]

Stūpas and Monasteries

Masson, who first explored this place, opened as many as 13 stūpas and recovered bone-relics or ashes from them, usually kept in silver or gold or ivory caskets inside the steatite vases. He also recovered several coins belonging to Indo-Parthian, Indo-Greek and Indo-Sassanian kings. Among other objects, he also found a 'tuz-leaf' manuscript in Kharostī script describing the 'Sarnath Sermon', an earthen jar containing the relics of the Buddha with Kharostī inscriptions in two lines, numerous gold rings, gems of different varieties, pearls and silver objects of many varieties.[1]

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[1] Cf. *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), p. -212; Cf. Upasak, C.S. : *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, p. 31 & 166.

[2] For instance, Nalanda Mahāvihāra had several tanks, which still exist all around the ancient ruins. One of them is called *Dīgha Pokhara* or 'large tank' and the other *Indra Pokhara* or *Indra Puskaraṇī.*

[3] Cf. Benjamin Rowland Jr. : *Ancient Art of Afghanistan*, p. -72.

The scientific exploration of the monuments of Hadda only began with the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA) in 1923-24 under Jules Barthons.[2] The French archeologists surveyed several sites, excavated many of them and recovered numerous objects of great significance. The sites that they explored included (i) Tapa Kalan, (ii) Tapa-Kafiriha, (iii) Bagh-gai, (iv) Chakhil-i-Ghoundi, (v) Prates, (vi) Gar-Nao and (vii) Deh Goundi.

Tapa-Kalan, meaning 'Principal Stūpa' is probably the most important stūpa site of Hadda although no relics could be recovered from there. The stūpa is surrounded by the stūpas of medium and small sizes, numbering altogether 144, erected all around it.[3] It was definitely a 'Bone-relic stūpa' or *Śārīrika-stūpa* and contained the corporeal relics of Buddha or some other pious monk. May it be the stūpa which contained the 'skull-bone of the Buddha' which was the main attraction for all the pilgrims coming to this side. Fa-hsien, Sung-yun, Hiuen-tsiang have invariably given the accounts of it. To venerate a stūpa containing the *Śarīradhātu* or corporeal relics of the Buddha has ever been considered as a pious act among the Buddhists. Devotees coming to pay their homage to such a stūpa used to offer flowers and often commemorated their visits by erecting stūpas of brick, stone, mud or even of terracotta near the main stūpa as their pious offerings. This feature of small stūpas around a *Śārīrika-stūpa* containing the body-relics of the Buddha or of some saint can be noticed throughout the Buddhist world. Numerous such votive stūpas can be seen around the Sariputta Caitya in Nalanda ruins. From there hundreds of terra-cotta sealings having the figure of a stūpa or stupas or of Buddha have been recovered which are nothing but the offerings of the devotees who came to pay their homage. Similarly such votice-stūpa-offerings are in extant around the Dharmarajika stūpa at Sarnath. The Dhammekha stūpa that stands so majestically at Sarnath near the Dharmarajika stūpa was also a votice or *Uddesika stūpa*, probably an offering of Aśoka when he visited the place to venerate the relics of the Buddha enshrined there. In all probability the Tapa-Kalan contained the bone relics of the Buddha and was the most important sacred site of Hadda.

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1. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, pp. 105-111.
2. Cf. *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vols. - IV, V, VI.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. -IV, p. -116.

As usual, the ruins of monasteries were also recovered close to it, noticed by the French archaeologists, to the south-east of Tapa-Kalan-stūpa.

At a place called Tapa-i-Kafiriha there exist two grand stūpas and the ruins of two monasteries. Some 46 votive stūpas in different sizes were also found erected near these two great stūpas, which again indicate them being the *Śārīrika stūpas* of some Buddhist saints, if not of Buddha. Similarly some 77 such votive stupas were found near a site locally called Bagh-Gai; and 30 stupas in small sizes stand at a place called Chikhil-i-Ghoundi, without any trace of a large stūpa, that certainly stood in the past. The ruins of a monastery also exist near this ancient site. Another place now called Prates was also an important Buddhist site from where some 62 stūpas were counted by the French Archaeologists, although they found no trace of any monastery which, of course, has since disappeared. At Gar-Nao, the ruins of one monastery, 3 temples and 24 stūpas, were discovered, which again suggest the importance of the site that it held in the past. Yet again about sixteen stūpas came to the notice, having no ruins of any monastery, at a site now called Deh-Ghoundi.

It is interesting to find that on the temples and also on some of the stūpas, several reliefs in Gandhāra style which include the scenes of several Jātakas, such as, the scene from Sivi Jātaka, Dīpaṅkara Jātaka; the episode of foretelling the birth of Siddhārtha to his father Suddhodana by some Brāhmaṇa, the Birth of Siddhārtha at Lumbini showing his mother Mahāmāyā, the scene of the mad elephant let loose against the Buddha by Devadatta; the 'Great Departure' scene; Sambodhi under the Pipala tree; Uruvela Kasyapa and the serpent episode; the conquest of Māra and Nirvāṇa and many such other depictions.

Recently the Japanese Archaeological team of Kyoto University led by Professor S. Mizuno has explored another site at Lalma, located at the south-west end of the Hadda group, which is separated by a wide valley of the main hills. A large stūpa was opened here, which is surrounded by 17 votive stūpas. The stūpa was plastered and embellished with stucco figures of Buddha and Boddhisattvas. No relics were however, recovered from this stūpa.[1] Lalma also appears to be an important Buddhist centre at Hadda in ancient days.

Caves of Hadda

A good number of caves from Hadda have also been discovered, some of them quite large which served as shrines or meeting halls, while others were the living cells. Masson noticed as many as 13 caves near Tapa Zurgaran or Goldsmith's Mound. He found some of them highly painted, though he could not derive any theme of them.[1] Simpson also discovered several caves, some square in form while others circular with dome overhead. He attempted to compare some of them with the ancient caves of Barabar (in Gaya district, Bihar, India) of Aśoka and his grand-son Daśaratha created for the rainy resort of the Ājivika mendicants. He also noticed some traces of decorations with colour paintings in them.[2] The Japanese team while making the survey of Lalma discovered as many as 44 caves, mostly consisting of a single room, only some have double rooms. Some of the caves contain a large niche on the walls and irregular holes on the floors. Professor Mizuno could discover some coins of later Kuṣāṇa and Kusano-Sassanian periods; and has suggested the date of the Lalma site of about 300 or 400 A.D.[3]

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[1] Mizuno S. : *Durman Tepe and Lalma*, (Kyoto (1968), pp. 109-112.

Sculptural Art of Hadda

Hadda has become renowned for Buddhist sculptural art manifested mostly on icons and on some stucco figures designed in the so called Gandhāra or Greaco-Indian fashion. Some of the specimens are regarded as the excellent pieces of art. The Tapa Kalan is the site in Hadda which has yielded numerous icons and stuccoes, some exhibit excellence in art. It is generally believed that the iconographical art of Hadda is more leaned to Hellanistic or Classical Art than to Indian or Iranian Arts.[4] No doubt the Buddhist Art at Hadda appears to have attained new dimensions showing cultural interactions between Hellenism and Buddhism, as a result the deities belonging to the former have got a place in Buddhist pantheon. Heracles, the famous Hellenic god, is carved out as one of the attendants of the Buddha in a panel discovered from Tapa Kalan, an obvious impact of Buddhism on Hellenism and not the *vice-versa* since Buddha is regarded as a great 'person' endowed with 'Ten Perfections' (*pāramitās*), while Heracles had attained only one, the *Viriya* or Prowess.

It is interesting to observe that the icons at Hadda mostly include standing or walking Buddhas in different *Mudrās*, accompanied with the Devatas, monks and sometimes with the worshippers. The Buddha sometimes appears in *Abhaya Mudrā*, mostly in *Pārupana* or "fully

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1. *Ariana Antiqua* : Ed. H.H. Wilson, p. -112.
2. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), (1882), Vol. -XIV, pp. 329-330.
3. Mizuno, S. : *Durman Tape and Lalma*, Kyoto (1968), p. -112.
4. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Part-I, (Lieden E.J. Brill, 1976), p. - 2; also *Cf.* Rowland B. : *The Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, p. -96.

covered" style. The head of the Buddha is usually encircled by a halo, a feature which became current in paintings or in reliefs in later days. The walls of some of the stūpas are marked by the large 'Walking Buddhas'. It is conspicuous to notice that the statues of the Buddha in seated posture are usually represented in *Dhyānamudrā*, only some in *Dharmacakramudrā*. There are a few reliefs in the schist or limestone which illustrate the life-scenes of the Buddha or Jātakas, which we have referred to earlier. The representation of Vajrapāṇi with the Buddha is remarkable. The athletic warrior with the features of Heracles with his lion skin and club is unique. Hariti (or Greek Artemis) and Pañcasikha (king of Gandhārvas) are supposed to be the 'protecting deities' of the monasteries. Another stone sculpture of Hadda appears to be of Hariti or Artemis, seated between two standing attendants. A stucco representing the *Garuḍa* reflects the Hellenistic influence. The bird is seen spreading his wings majestically, a princely turban on head. In his hooked beak, he holds a serpent, for the *Garuḍas* are supposed to be the enemy of snakes. [1]

It has been observed that the art on icons that appears in Hadda is the 'expression of a Buddhism in which there is still no clear differentiation between Buddha and Bodhisattva' .[2] This feature of art in Hadda is a pointer to the fact that Hadda had been a centre of Later Theravāda or Hīnayāna school of Buddhism rather than of Mahāyāna school, as some believe. The accounts of Chinese travellers also confirm this fact as they too do not speak anything about Mahāyāna school there.

Acquatic Scene Sculpture

The representation of an acquatic scene in one of the porches in Hadda which illustrates Nāgas as human beings in princely dress, with their turbans is a unique sculpture. It is also called 'Fish Porch Scene' by some because of many fish there. The sculpture is supposed to be of 2nd or 3rd century A.D..[3] This piece of sculpture was discovered from Tape-Shotor (probably derived from the term 'Sthavira stūpa'). Some try to interpret it as a 'scene of submission of a Nāga king to Buddhism'.[4] No doubt the Nāgas or serpents have been associated with a number of anacdotes found in the Buddhist texts and some ecclesiastical rules are also connected with the *Nāgaloka* or 'serpent

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1. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Part-I (Lieden E. J. Brill, 1976), p.-2; Cf. Rawland, B. :*The Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, p.-96.
2. Rowland, B. *op. cit.* p. 96.
3. Cf. Mustamandy, S. : *The Fishporch*, p.-8.
4. Cf. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia* (Lieden E.J. Brill), part-II, p. -37.

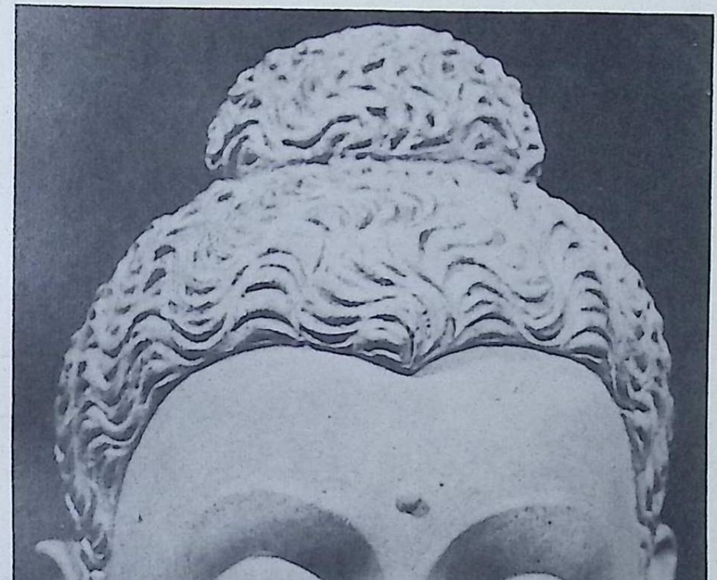

Figure 3 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Head of Buddha [2nd-3rd cent. A.D.] (stone).

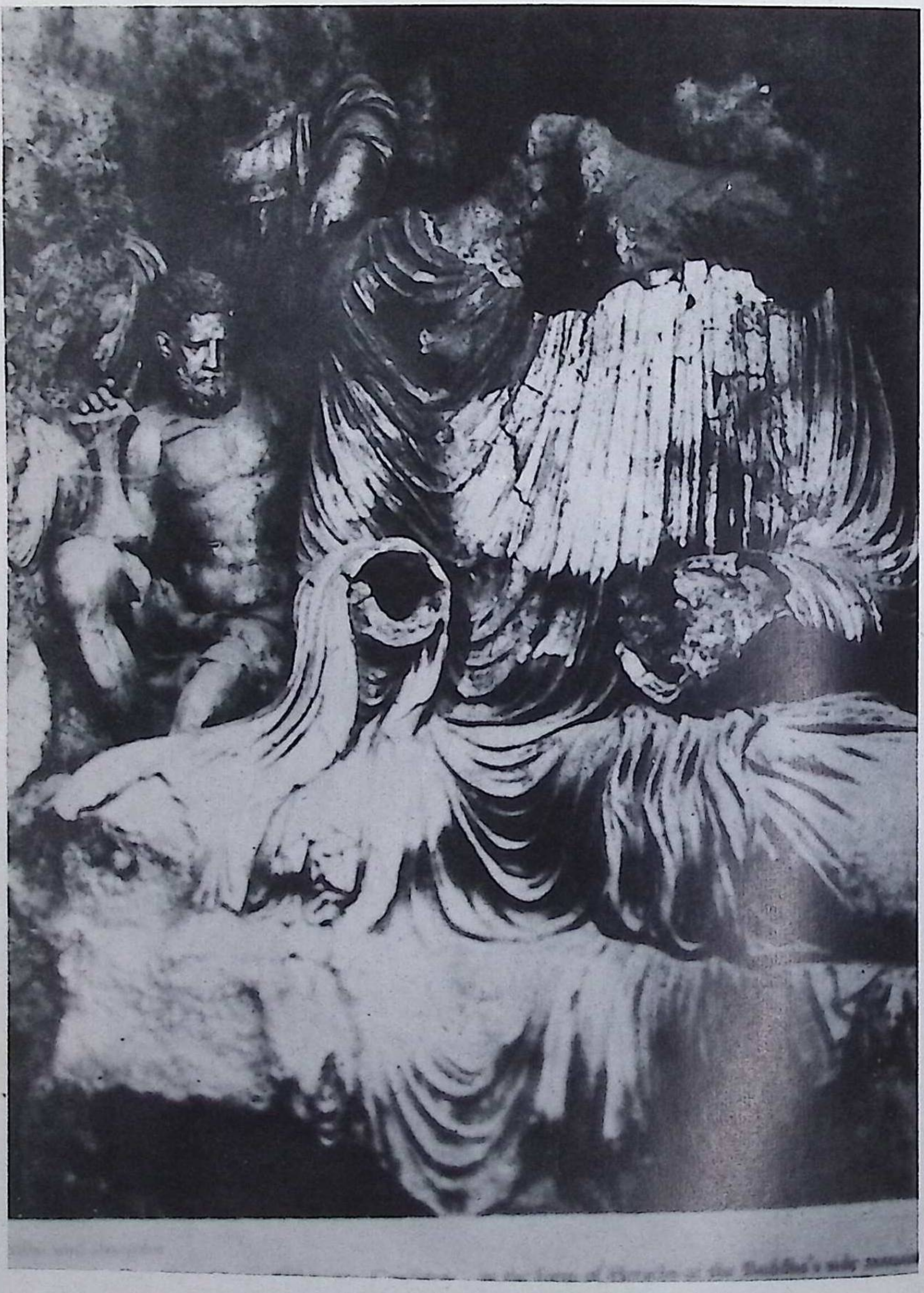

Figure 4 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Buddha with Heracles (stone) (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.).

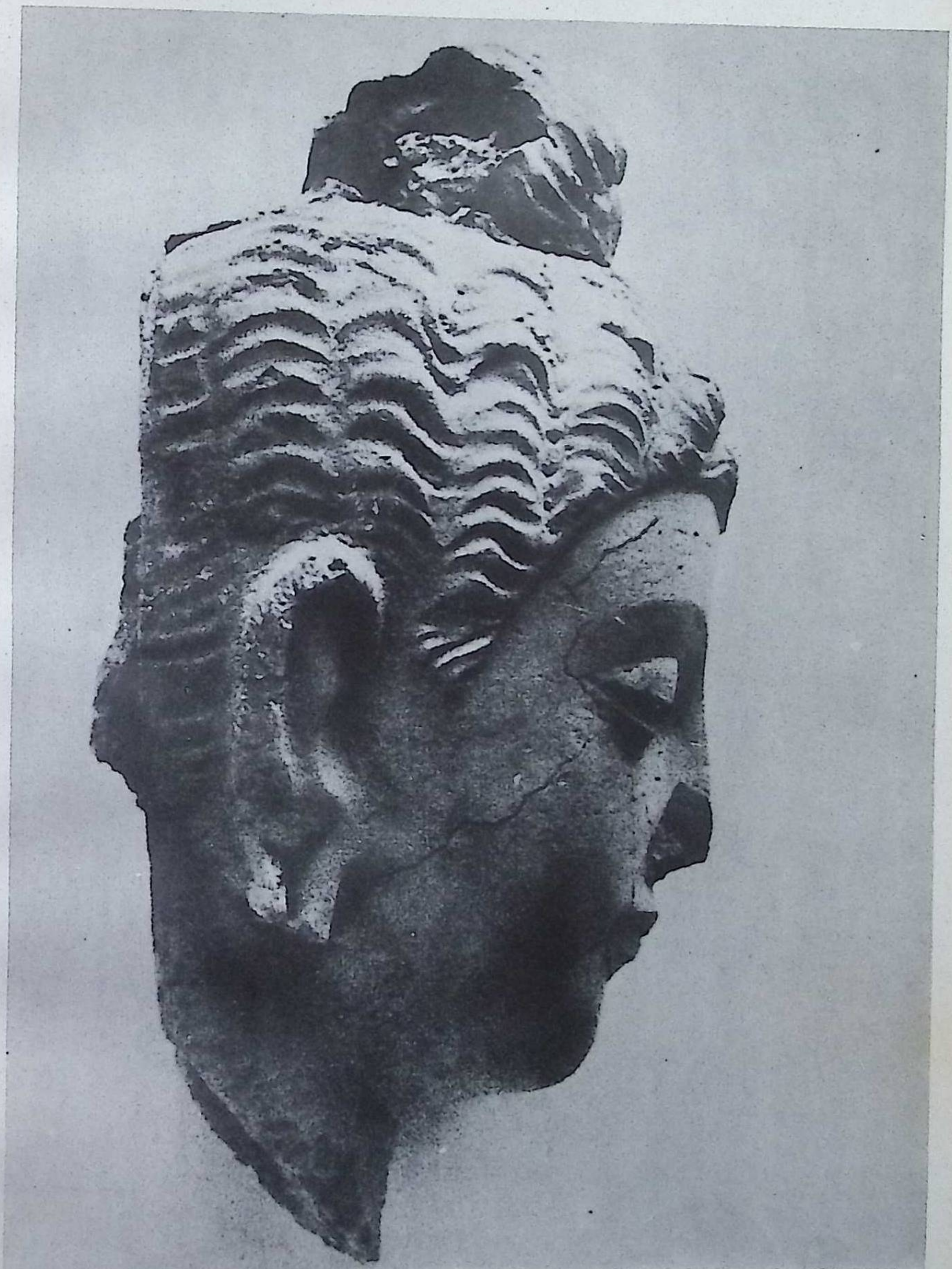

Figure 5 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Head of Buddha (Stucco) (3rd-4th cent. A.D.) (Kabul Museum)

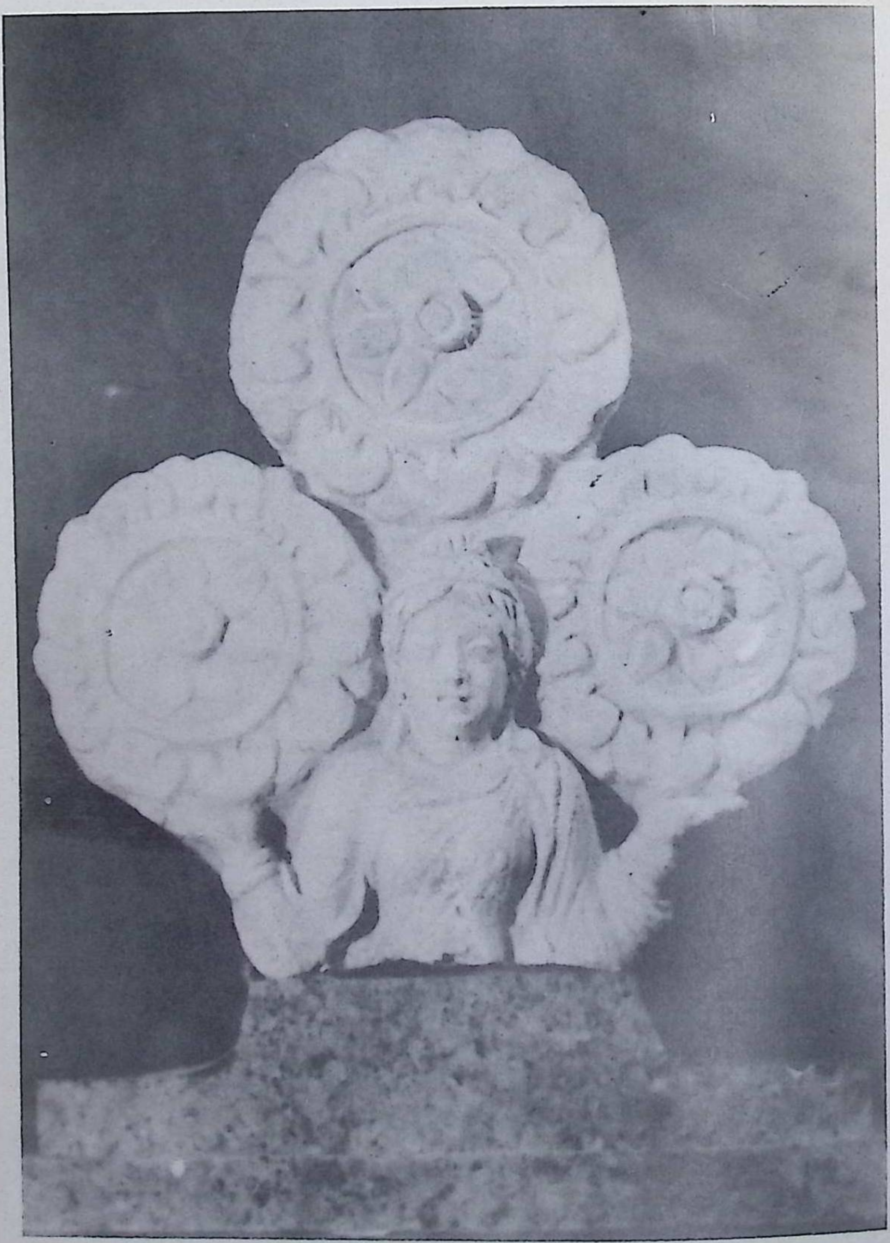

Figure 6 *Jalalabad: Hadda:*
Lady holding Triratna (stucco) (3rd-5th cent. A.D.)
(Kabul Museum),

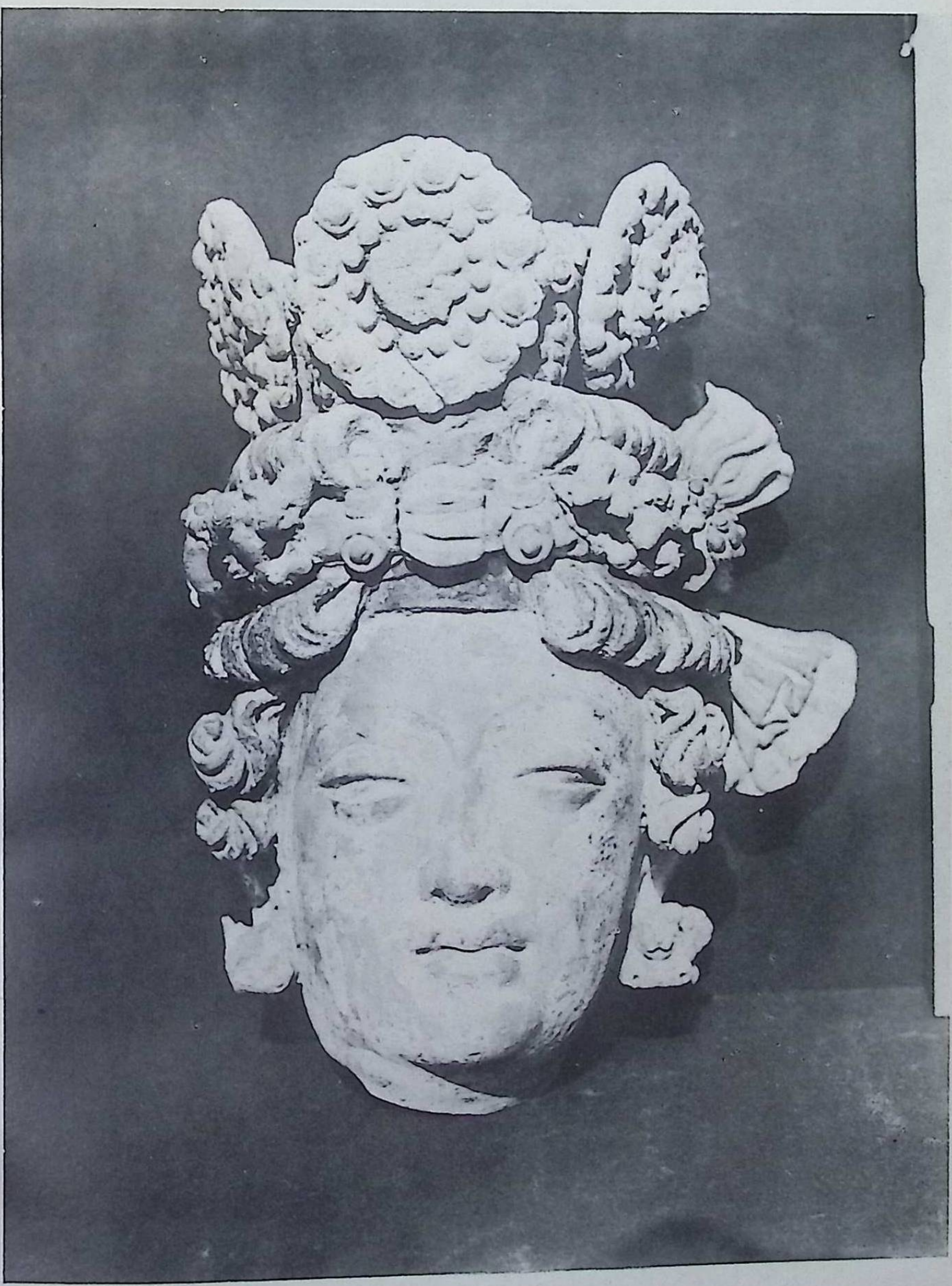

Figure 7 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Bodhisattva with Triratna Head ornamentation and lotus (stucco) (Afghan Archaeological Centre, Kabul) (3rd-4th cent. A.D.)

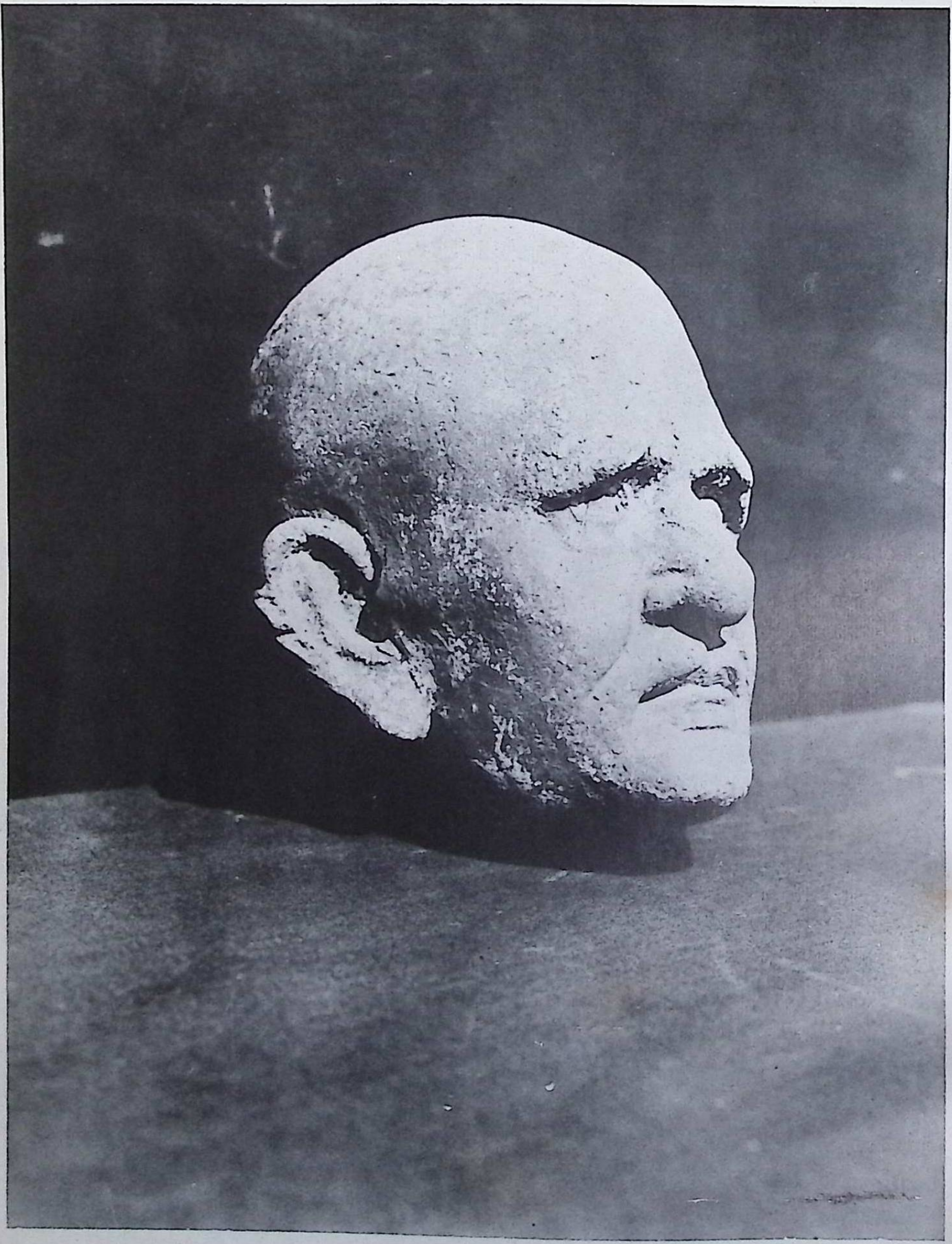

Figure 8 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Head of a monk (stucco) (Afghan Archaeological Centre, Kabul) (3rd-5th cent. A.D.).

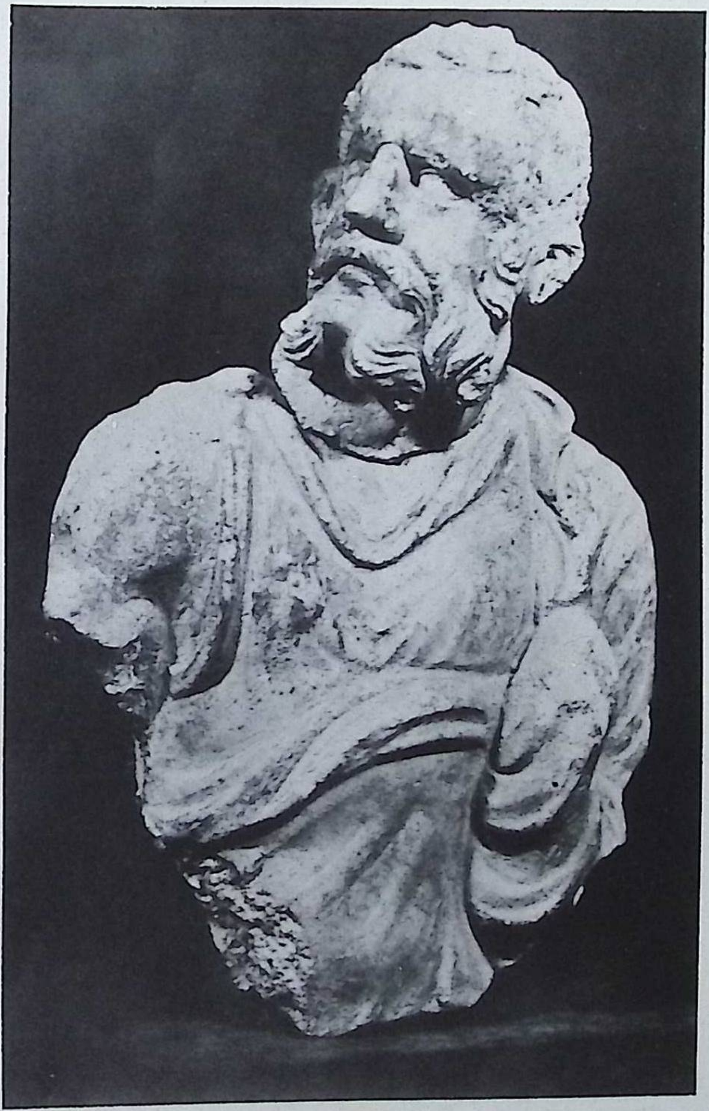

Figure 9 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
A Greek lay-devotee (Stucco) (Kabul Museum)
(3rd-5th cent. A.D.)

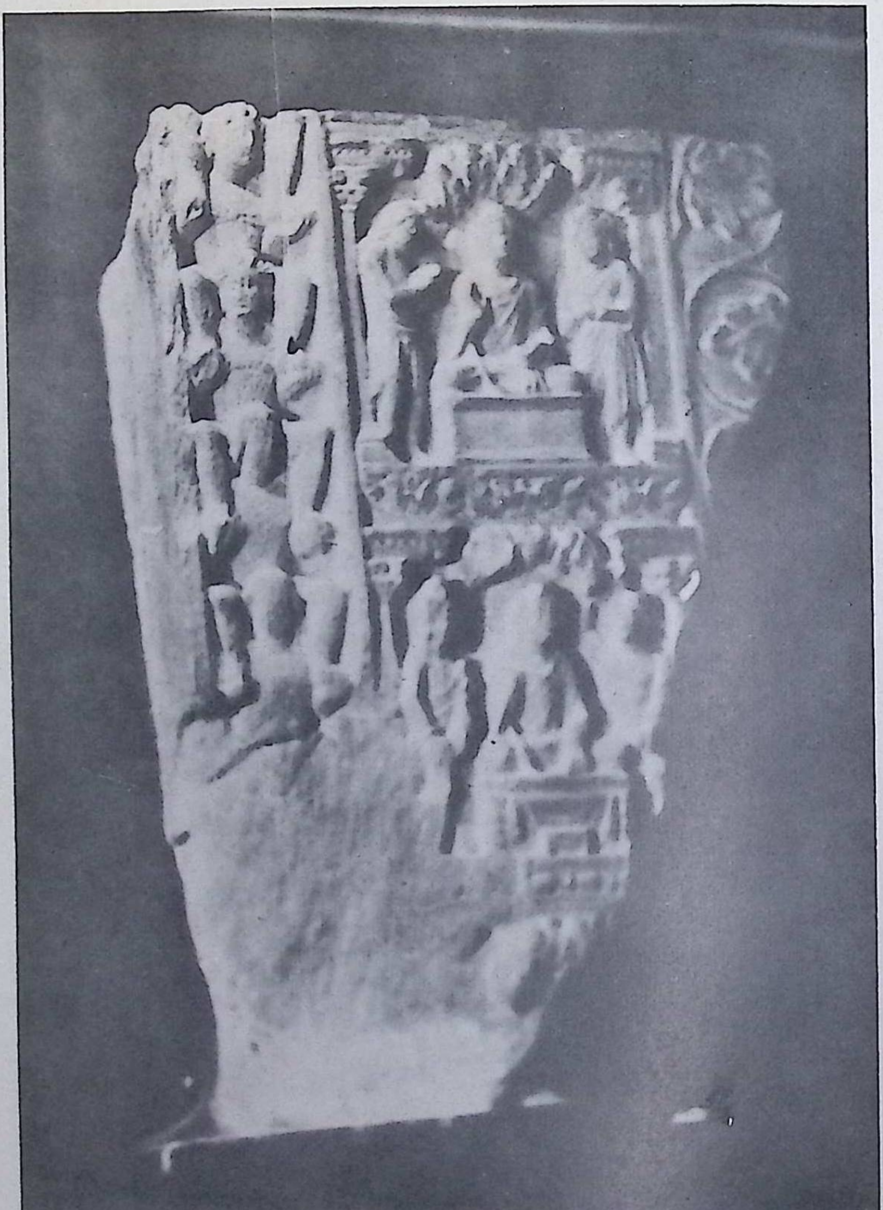

Figure 10 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Tapassu-Ballika offering sweet-ball to Buddha
(Schist) (Kabul Museum) (3rd-4th cent. A.D.)

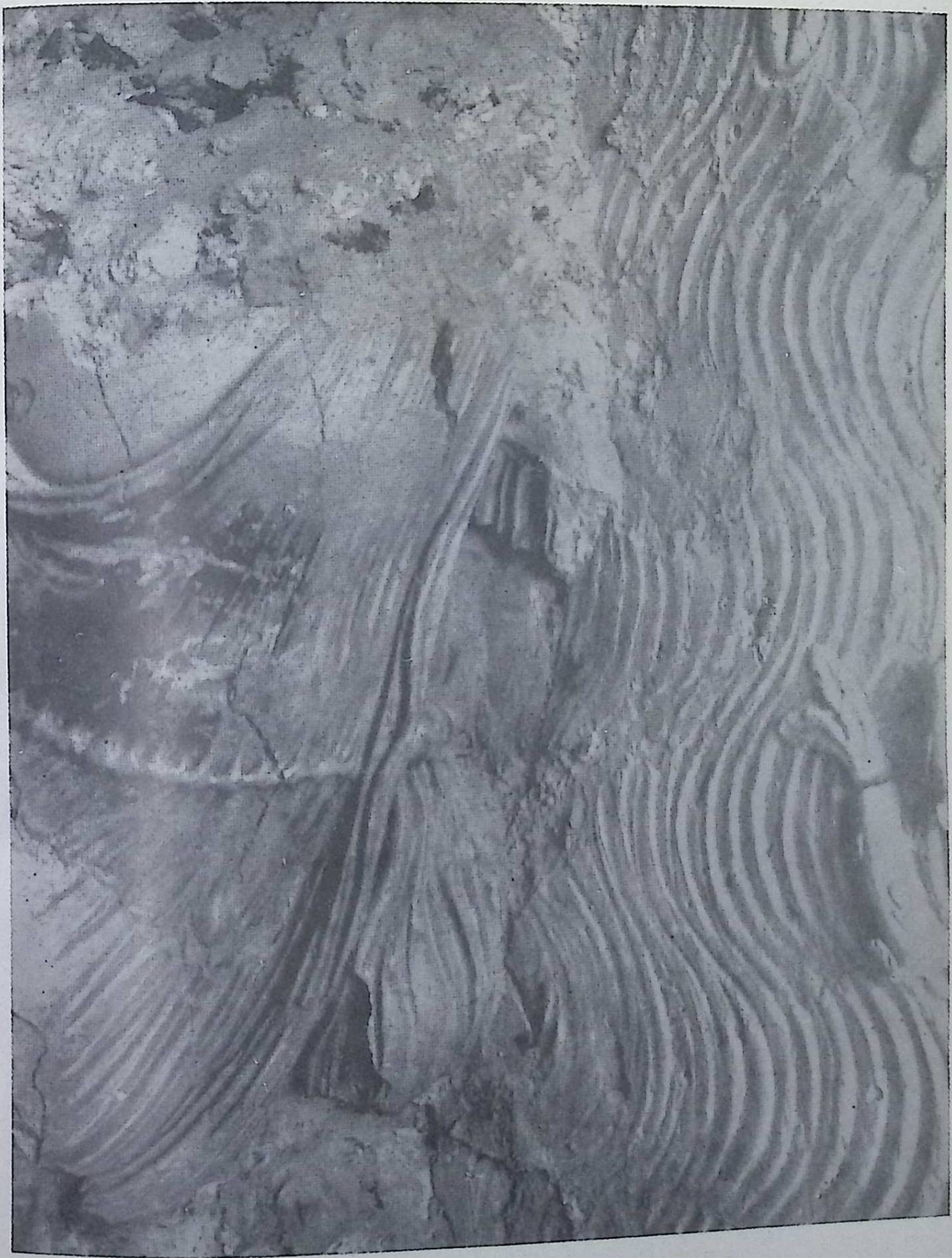

Figure 11 *Jalalabad:Hadda:* Acquatic Scene Sculture.

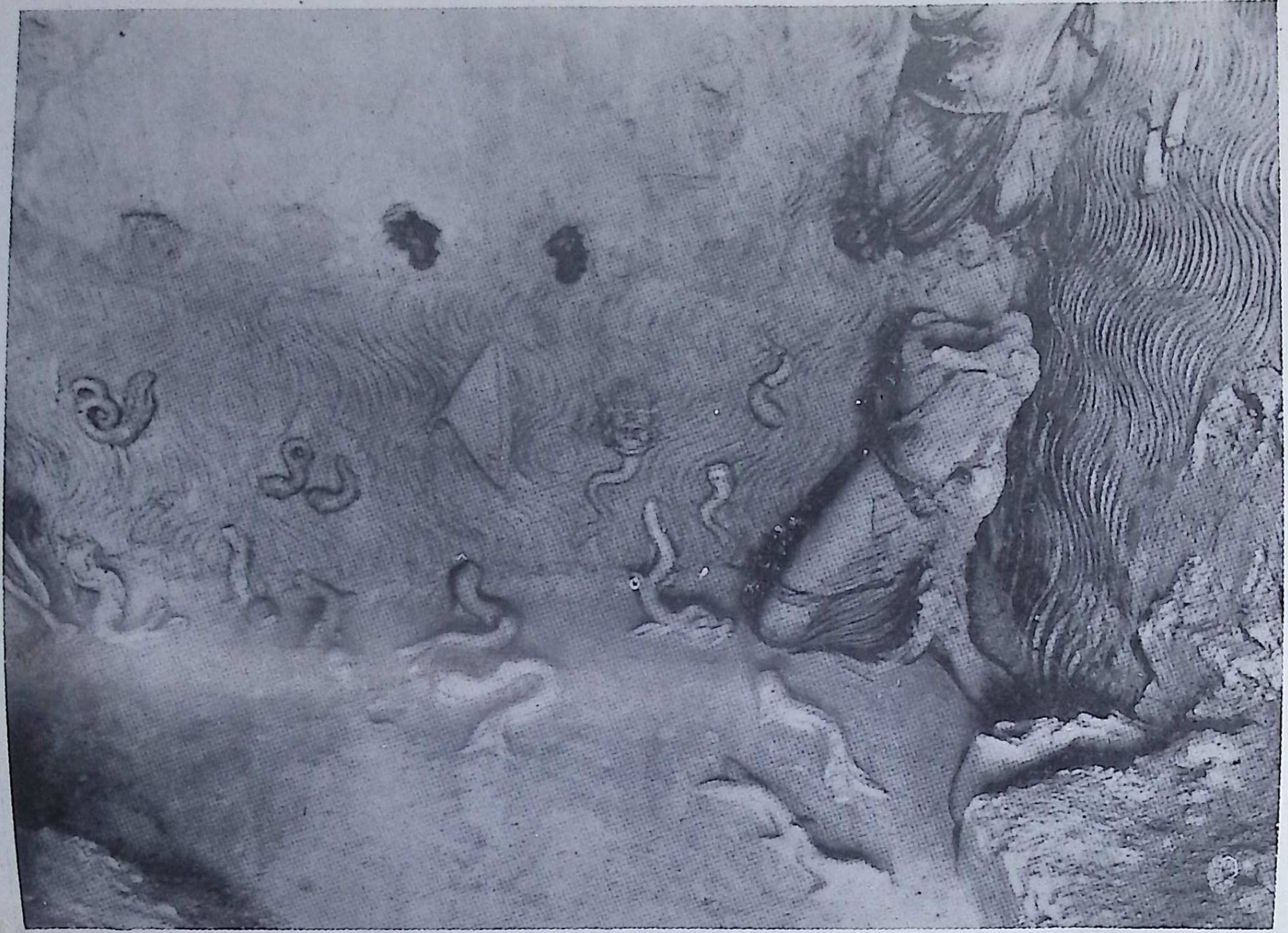

Figure 12 *Jalalabad:Hadda:*
Acquatic Scene Sculture.

world'. This sculpture of Nāga prince was probably connected with some traditional story of Nāgas, then prevalent in the area, which of course, is not known to us at present from any source.

Paintings of Hadda

We have mentioned earlier that Simpson noticed some sort of variegated paintings in some of the caves of Hadda.[1] The paintings on the walls of the caves are now in blurred state and nothing significant can be derived from them. Only few could come to observation. Two little celestial winged beings supporting a crown may be of some interest which is painted on the vault of a niche containing the statue of the Buddha.[2] This painting may be compared with the paintings of Bamiyan and may be placed in 4th or 5th century A.D.

The art of Hadda represents mostly the so called Gandhāra art, tinged with Indian style. Some art critics believe that Hadda represents the end of the Gandhāra style which began in early Christian era.[3] But it should be borne in mind that Hadda flourished as a centre of Buddhism much before these artifices came into existence, say one or two centuries before the Christian era and some of the antiquities and some pieces of Buddhist art may be placed to this period. Hadda however continued to be a sacred place for the Buddhists for centuries and, so many monastic establishments rose as the centres of Buddhism in the successsive periods. The great sacred place of Buddha's skull relic remained a place of pilgrimage throughout till the Islamic invasion in about 9th or 10th century A.D., which of course proved a final blow when Buddhist monasteries and shrines were razed to the ground and the monks either had to court sword or to accept Islam. It was a torrential sweep over this great Buddhist land and Buddhism disappeared from the country for ever.

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1. *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.), Vol. -XIV (1882), pp. 329-330; see Plate No. -I.
2. Liedan E.J. Brill (1970): *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, part two, p. 38, fig. -103.
3. Rowland, B. : *Ancient Art from Afghanistan* (1966), p. 73.

4

KABUL

A Centre of Sarvāstivāda

Although the river Kubhā, modern the Kabul, is known to the Vedas, the town by this name rather came late into existence. The region behind the Hindu-kush passes of the high mountain valley, is described in the Iranian inscriptions as *Paroparisena* or Paroparisadai meaning the region beyond the mountain too high for the *Sena* bird (hawk) to cross. Beyond this is the eastern part comprising the lowlands of the Kabul and the Swat rivers as far as the Indus including the northern regions of the Kuru and Kamboja countries also known as Gandhāra, in general sense, in some of the ancient Persian inscriptions. In the Vedic literature however we come across the name of a tribe called *Pakta*.[1] In ancient Iranian literature this tribe is described as *'Paktyes'*, different from Indians, as they wore the furlined coats. The ethnical name of the inhabitants of Kabul and adjoining regions is also known as Paropamisos or Paropamisadai to the Iranians; and the same as Paktyes. The present Pakthoons or Paṭhānas are none other than the ancient Pakta or Paktyes who have been residing in this region from very early times.[2]

We have already suggested that Buddhism was first introduced in the eastern part of Afghanistan, in Uḍyāna, through the efforts of the Mahāsāṅghika, a large group of monks who are said to have separated from the Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda on the ocassion of the Second Buddhist Council held at Vesali, one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha. Earlier, Tapssu and Bhallika, the

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1. *Paktāro ye ca te Janāḥ - Atharveda* - 10-9-76.
2. *India Antiqua -Vogel's 50th Anniversary of His Doctorate* (1947), Article by E.E. Herfield : 'Early Historical Contacts between the Old Iranian Empire and India,' p. -182.

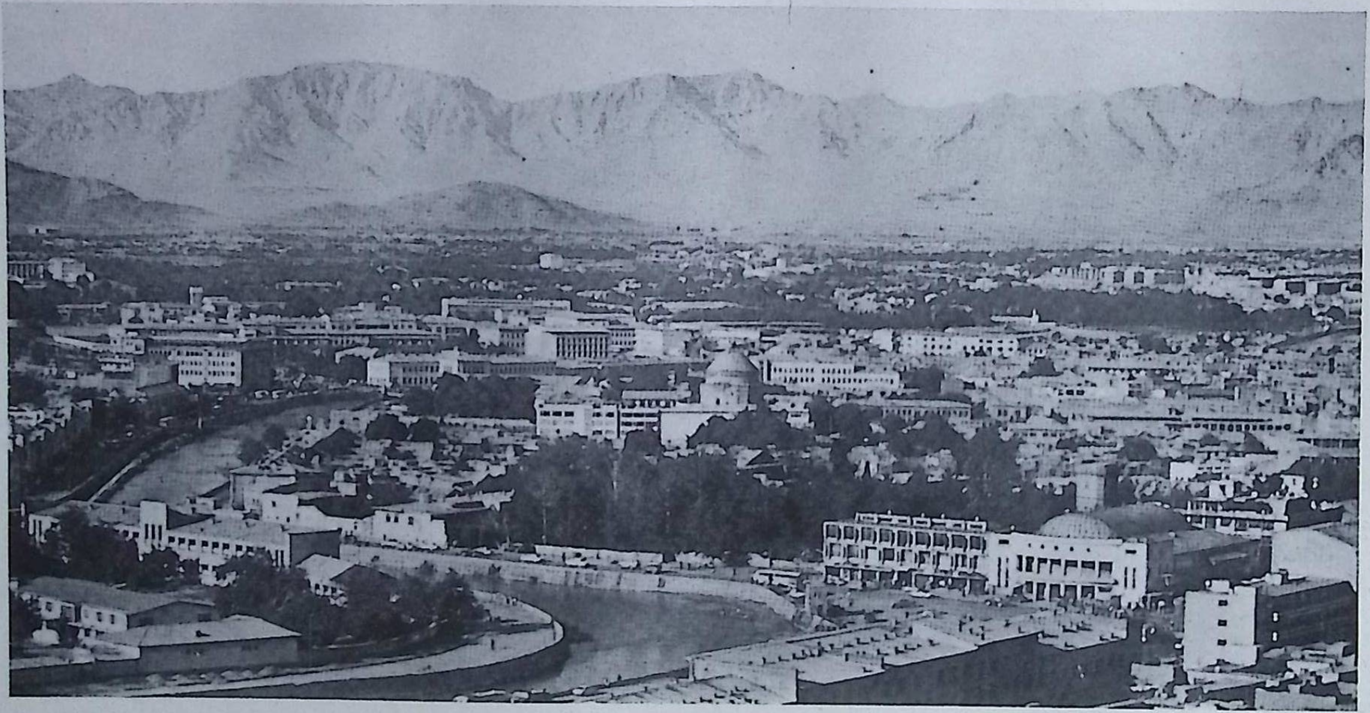

Figure 13 General View of Kabul with ancient walls (5th cent. A.D.)

first two chief lay-disciples, the latter by becoming a Buddhist monk had already established some centre at Balkh. But, Kabul appears to have become proselytised to Buddhism by the Mahāsāṅghikas who had established their stronghold in Uḍyāna or Nagarahāra. The Mahāsāṅghika group of Theravāda remained most powerful in the eastern Afghanistan including Kabul for several centuries. This fact is attested by epigraphical evidences besides the literary records. About 30 miles west of Kabul we have discovered an inscription from a place called Wardak of about 2nd century A.D. which refers to the name of the Mahāsāṅghika school of Buddhism. This is the earliest epigraph which mentions any school of Buddhism in Afghanistan.

The inscription of Wardak is engraved on a reliquary containing the relics of the Buddha enshrined in a stūpa. It is written in Kharosti script and the language is Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit. It is dated year 51 in the month of 'Artemisios' during the reign of Huviska. Below are the text & translation of the epigraph :-

Text: **Line-1 ::** Saṃ 20 20 10 1 masy(e) Artemisiya saṣṭhehi 10 4 1
imena gad (r)ig (r) ena Kamagulya pu (tra)
Vagramareg(r)a s(r) risa Khavadm (r) i
Kadalayig (r) a Vagramarig(r) a viharam(r) i
Bhag(r) avada Sakyamune sarira paristhaveti.

Line-2 :: Imena Kuśalamulena maharaja rayatiraja Ho
(or Hu) veshkas (r) a agrabhag(r)ae puyae
bhavatu yo ca me bhuya naṭig(r) amitrasambho-
tig(r)ana puyae bhavatu mahiya ca Vag(r) a
Marig(r)as(r)a agrabhag (r)a pad (r) iyamisae.

Line-3 :: Bhavatu sarvastvana arogadakshinae bhavatu
avi ya narag (r) apariyata yava bhavagra yo atra
amtara a-(ṃ)ḍajo jalayuga ya yetiga arupyata
sarvina puyae bhavatu mahiya ca rohana sada
sarvina avashad(r) igana sa parivara ca
agrabhagapad(r)y imsae bhavatu mithyagus(r)a
ca agrabhaga bhavatu.

Line-4 :: Esha vihara acaryana Mahasaṁghigana
parigraha.

Translation ::

> Anno 51, in the month of Arthemisios, when 15 had appeared, at this hour the Kamagulya scion Vagramaregra - he has made abode here in the Khawat - establishes the relic of the Lord Śākyamuni in the Vagramarigra vihāra, in a stūpa.Through this root of bliss, may it be for the principal lot of the Mhārājatirāja Huviṣka, may it be for the honour of my mother and father, may it be for the honour of my brother Hasthuṇa Mareg, and may it be for the benefit of health of all beings. And moreover, it be for the honour of all, what there is herebetween, hell upto the culminating point of existence: egg-born and the viviparous ones, as far as formless existence, and for my descendants, always for all who are heretics, and may also the surrounding structure be for sharing of the principal lot for the man of false belief. This vihāra is the acceptance of the Mahāsāṅghika teachers.[1]

This epigraph is of extremely important for the history of the Mahāsāṅghika school of Buddhism and one of its branches, the Bhadrayānika (*Vagramarigra*) school as referred to in the epigraph. The epigraph also suggests the great influence and importance of the Mahāsāṅghikas, held in this area on the people and also on the royalty. The inscription informs that the *'Vagramarigra,* vihāra was donated to the monks belonging to the school of Mahasanghika in the beginning; but later by the time of this epigraph it became to be called after Bhadramārgiya or Bhadrayānika or *'Vagramarigra'*. one of the branches of the Mahāsāṅghika school. The term *'Vagramarigra'* of the epigraph is obviously the derivative from *Bhadrayānika* (or *Bhadramārgīya*). It is remarkable to observe that while the donor of the relic of the Buddha is called *Vagramaregra* i.e. follower of

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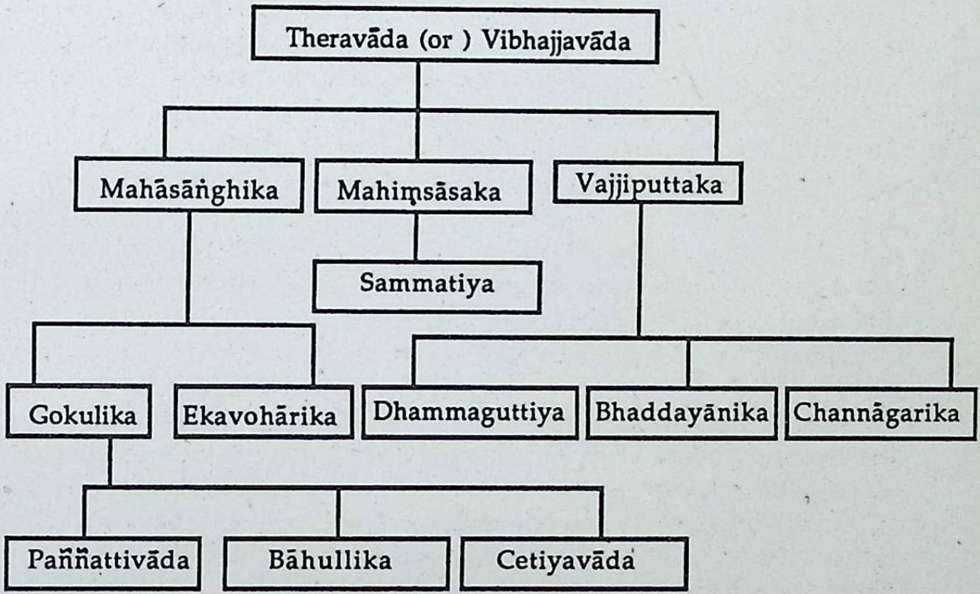
[1] The text and translation from Konow, Stein : *C.I.I.*, Vol. -II, No. -XXXVI, pp. 165-170; *Cf. E.I.*, Vol.-XI, pp. 210 ff.; *J.R.A.S.*, Vol. -XX, p. -231 ff. ; Sircar, D.C. : *Select Inscriptions*, Vol.-I, No.-55, pp. 158-159; E. Thomas : *Essays on Indian Antiquity*, Edt. by James Prinsep (1858), p.-161 ff.; *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. -XXX, p. -337 ff.; *J.A.*, Vol. -XI (1914), p. -569 ff.; As mentioned by Konow, according to Dr. Van Wigk's calculation the date is 25th April, 179 A.D. (*C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, p. -167).

Bhadrayāna, the vihāra is described as *Vagramarigra-vihāra*, signifying the vihāra of the Bhadrayāinka. Thus, the epigraph not only refers to the main school of Mahasanghika but also mentions one of its branches. In the *Mahāvaṃsa* we find the list of eighteen names of Schools of Buddhism, including the main school, the Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda school.[1] The following table may be quoted :-


Theravāda (or) Vibhajjavāda
Mahāsāṅghika
Mahiṃsāsaka
Vajjiputtaka
Sammatiya
Gokulika
Ekavohārika
Dhammaguttiya
Bhaddayānika
Channāgarika
Paññattivāda
Bāhullika
Cetiyavāda

As a matter of fact the first main dissident in the Buddhist Saṅgha is called 'Mahāsāṅghika' for being large in number. Several other groups also came into being from them, although they were considered as independent groups siding the Mahāsāṅghika views. By and large they all were regarded as the Mahāsāṅghika or Later Theravāda School of Buddhism.

The place from where the relic casket is recovered is presently called Wardak, whereas in the epigraph the name of the place is

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1. *Mahāvaṃsa*, V. 1-10 Vs.; Cf. *Dīpavaṃsa*, V. 40-48 Vs.; *Kathāvatthu*, 1; Trans. by Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids (P.T.S.), P. -XLII and 3; Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, p. -54; *Mahāvaṃsatikā*, (Nalanda Ed.), pp. 136-139. For Bhadrayānika see: *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.-350; for *Mahasanghika*, Ibid., Vol. -II, pp.-562-563; for Vajjiputtaka see *Ibid.*, pp. 812-813.

given as 'Khawat', which is also known from the survey maps.[1] It appears that originally 'Khawat' was the name of the place but since being a centre of the Bhadrayānika monks, it also came to be known after them, as *'Bhadrayānika'*, the derivative of which has since become 'Wardak' i.e. *Bhadraka* or Bhadrayānika, the *Vagramarigra* of the epigraph. Cunningham has identified Wardak with 'Begarda' of Ptolemy, which is possible; and which is closer to our identification.[2]

The Wardak inscription is dated in Makedonian era in the month of Artemisios, which roughly corresponds to the Indian Vaisākha and Jyeṣṭha.[3] Sten Konow mentions the corresponding date of the epigraph as April, 25, 179A.D. as according to the calculation made by Dr. Van Wijk.[4] The relic of Śākyamuni was enshrined on the day 15 (of the first half) had passed in the month of Artemisios, as according to Indian calendar sometime in the month of Vaisākha. It is likely that the relic was deposited in the stūpa on the 1st day of the bright half of Vaisākha and the Pujā and other celebrations continued till the auspicious full-moon day of the month.

On the basis of the Sanskrit influenced Prakrit of the inscription, Konow is of the opinion that 'the monks of Wardak were the immigrants from more eastern districts in India. And as a matter of fact, the Indian population of Afghanistan does not seem to have extended as far as Wardak. In other words, the Wardak inscription was drafted by foreign immigrants and not by old settlers in the country.'[5] This fact, if accepted, tends to suggest the cosmopolitan feature of the Buddhist monastic establishments where monks from all parts of the world could reside without any distinction of caste, creed or nationality, the very core of the Buddhist Order. Similar feature is noticed on the paintings of Bamiyan where Greek, Iranian, Central Asian and Indian arts are manifested simultaneously. Wardak was a monastery obviously belonging to the Bhadrāyāni or Mahāsāṅghika school of monks, but monks from India, Iran or from elsewhere besides the local monks also dwelt in concord no matter they followed the views of other schools since the ecclesiastical rules being almost identical, very little concerned with different philosophical ideologies. Puritanically they were one and the same.

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1. C.*I.I.*, Vol. -II, p. -165.
2. Cunningham, A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, p. -37.
3. Cf. Sircar, D.C. : *Select inscriptions*, Vol. -I (Second Ed.), p. -158, foot-note-4.
4. C.*I.I.*, Vol. -II, p.-165.
5. *Ibid.*, Vol. -II, P.-168.

Charles Masson discovered this place for the first time and noticed five or six ancient stūpas and numerous mounds which he called 'tumuli'. From there he recovered seven vases of metal and steatite with other various deposits. One of the brass vases contained the relics of the Buddha bearing the inscription in Kharostī script.[1] The French archaeologists have made a survey of the place. Gerard Fussman explored three stūpas and excavated two or three monasteries and some other ruins there, all belonging to Kuṣāṇa period.[2] It appears that during the Kuṣāṇa kings, particularly during Kaniṣka and Huviska, Wardak was in its hey-day; and Buddhism, particularly the Mahāsāṅghika school and its branch Bhandrāyānī were most predominant. This confirms that Kabul and its adjoining areas remained under the influence of the Later Theravāda Buddhism instead of Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda which was introduced in Afghanistan during the reign of Aśoka through the missionary led by Mahārakkhita who is said to have come to Yona country after the Third Buddhist Council held at Pāṭaliputra. Probably Mahārakkhita could not be very successful in his mission on account of the powerful strongholds of Mahāsāṅghikas which were established in this area. The Early Theravāda Buddhism could probably confine only in Nagarahāra area, though in less ascendancy and Kabul area remained all along under the influence of Later Theravāda.

Wardak continued to be an important centre of Buddhism till 7th century A.D. Chinese monk traveller Hiuen-tsiang visited the place and calls it *Fu-li-shih-sa-tang-na.*, Jullian restored it as 'Vṛijisthāna' while St. Martin restored it as ' Varadasthāna' and identified it with Wardak.[3] It is well known that the Mahāsāṅghikas were also known as 'Vajjiputtakas' or 'Vṛijjiputrakas' and so the Bhadrayānīs and other branches were generally regarded as Vajjiputtakas or Vṛijjiputraks since they were separated from the Early Theravāda at Vesali, the capital of the Vajjis. Huien-tsiang does not mention the name of the group of monks residing there; but no doubt they were all Hīnayānīs, otherwise he would have referred to Mahāyānīs living there, as he himself belonged to this school. He informs that the king of the country was a Turk who was a devout Buddhist and esteemed learning and honoured virtuous monks.[1] Perhaps Wardak monastery was inhabited by some learned monks and so Hiuen-tsiang being a scholar and saint visited the place to meet the learned monks there.

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[1] Masson C. : *Memoir on the Topes and Sculptural Monuments of Afghanistan* as published in the *Ariana Antiqua* : Edited by H.H. Wilson (Indian Reprint-1971), p.-118.

[2] Fussman G. : Ruines de la vallie de Wardak : *Arts Asiatiques*, Tome-XXX(1974), pp. 67-130.

[3] Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-267.

Proselytisation of Kabul

Probably Kabul came under the influence of Buddhism and attained prominence as a centre of Buddhism later than Wardak as evinced by the antiquities recovered from there. It is possible that some centres of Mahāsāṅghikas might have come into existence soon after they had established their stronghold in Nagarahāra or Uḍyāna although we have no source to corroborate. But, however during the Kuṣāṇa period Kabul had risen to a flourishing centre of Buddhism as elsewhere in Afghanistan. As a matter of fact Kabul lay between Uḍȳana (or Nagarahāra) and Kapiśa (Begram); and as such served as a stopping place for pilgrims, wanderer-ascetics, tourists and merchants all alike who passed to and from east and west. We have found a number of Buddhist monuments in and around Kabul valley which include the ruins of monasteries, stūpas and shrines of Kuṣāṇa period. We will deal with some of them in the following pages.

Shevaki

Among the Buddhist monuments of Kabul, Shevaki is probably one of the most ancient places where an ancient monastery existed from early Christian era. Shevaki is a village situated on the southern outskirt of modern Kabul town about 6 kms. away. Ruins of a number of stūpas and several mounds were noticed by Charles Masson who made an exploration of the place. According to his report there was a principal mound besides five or six inferior structures, seated in the recess of the hill adjacent to it. During excavations, he recovered a steatite vase with 'Bactro-Pali' (Kharosti) inscription written in ink and a golden coin of 'Mo Kadphises' (Maues Kadphises) from the principal mound.[2] The recovery of these materials suggests that there existed a monastery of some importance. Unfortunately we do not know what was written on the vase, which may probably have contained the relics of the Buddha or of some Arhanta and writing over it was the record of it. The other antiquities discovered from there also belong to

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk. -XII, p.-267; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, Bk.-V, p.-193; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 267-268.

[2] *Ariana Antiqua*, '*Memoir on the Topes and Sculptural Monuments of Afghanistan*, Chapter-II, pp.-114-116.

Kuṣāṇa period suggesting the place as another flourishing Buddhist Centre.

The green land of Shevaki includes some ancient places which still hold their ancient names, for instance, Begram or Beghram, Butkhak.[1] Obviously Begram or Beghram is derived from the term *Vihāragrāma*, like ancient Kapiśa; presently called Begram, simply because of the fact that village was established on or near the debris of an ancient Vihāra and hence this name. So also 'Butkhak' reminds the 'destruction of a temple of Buddha' which once adorned the place. *Butkhak* literally means 'the statue (of the Buddha) crushed into dust'. The term *'but'* is obviously a derivative from 'Buddha' as discerned by many.[2] Another site near Shevaki is known as 'Khurd Kabul', i.e. 'Little Kabul' which also contains some ancient Buddhist monuments.

Recently the Japanese Archaeological Mission has made the exploration of Shevaki and has noticed the ruins of four stūpas and a monastery. One of these stūpas, the easterly one, is the biggest and well preserved. The trilobed arches of the stūpa were once decorated with the images of the Buddha and other deities. The pointed arches and Indo-Corinthian pilasters once embellished the stūpa in the past. Another stūpa, now in ruinous condition, was decorated in the similar style. The third stūpa, now in a dilapidated condition, is located very close to the monastic area. The construction of it was very compact and once it was grand in look. The fourth stūpa, although small, is erected in the similar fashion and is still in good condition.[3]

Shevaki is conspicuous for its two *sthambhas* or Columns, the Chakri Minar and the Surkh Minar which stand on the top of the mountain. Both could be seen from a distance, but the latter is completely disappeared from the sight since the earthquake in 1965. These *stambhas* stood inside a monastery, the ruins of which could still be seen. The 'Chakri Minar', as the name itself suggests, was once surmounted with a *Cakra* or the 'Wheel of Law' (*Dharmacakra*), which is now no more. The erection of the two *sthambhas* is of some importance. They are built with pieces of slate just superimposed without any concrete or cement to a height of 158 feet. One is built on the slope facing the Kabul valley; the other was on the opposite slope leading to Khurd Kabul. Very likely they were built during the supremacy of the Kusāna power in Kabul and certainly before the 5th

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1. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad, Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p.-124.
2. Cf. *B.S.O.A.S.*, VI (1930-32), pp. 279-283.
3. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* p.-124.

century A.D.[1] These two pillars could stand defying rain, snow, wind and earthquakes till 1964 when one of them collapsed in an earthquake. The erection of these two *sthambhas* inside a monastery suggests the great importance of the place in Kabul. Probably this was the most important centre of Buddhism which continued for centuries.

GUL-DARRAH AND KHURD KABUL STUPAS [2]

Gul-Darrah

The stūpa that stands in the valley of Gul-Darrah or 'the Valley of Flower' on the opposite side of the Shevaki ridge in the Logar valley is at most complete and best preserved. The Corinthian pilasters and the trilobed arches are still in good condition. Behind the stūpa lies the strongly fortified monastery and some small stūpas, probably the votive ones. The French Archaeologists got Sassanian coins and some terracotta objects from there.[3] There existed a monastery, the walls of which can easily be traced. The main building of the monastery forms a square court with the gate towards the west. Just in front of this gate rises the imposing side of the stūpa. The ruins of another stūpa is also visible, some thirty feet away from this stūpa to the north.[4]

Khurd Kabul

To the eastern extremity of this valley on the plain is situated a village now called 'Khurd Kabul' (or Little Kabul) from where also Masson noticed four or five small topes, of which only one is tolerably preserved.[5]

He found two copper coins of 'Mokadphises' (Maues), which suggests the age of the stūpa and may be placed in about 2nd century A.D. No doubt Khurd Kabul was also a monastic area of early period. Further explorations may yield new antiquities which may throw fresh light on the history of this monastery.

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1. Heras, H. : The Spread of Buddhism in Afghanistan, *Journal of University of Bombay*, Vol. -VI, (1938), p.-29.
2. See : *Ariana Antiqua*, Ed. H.H. Wilson, Chapter-II, p.-115ff.; Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad - Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), p.-125; Carl, J. : *Fortin du Saka et le Monastere du Guldara, M.D.A.F.A.*, Paris (1950), Vol.-VIII, pp. 14-18.
3. *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-VIII, pp. 16-17.
4. Heras, H. : *Journal of University of Bombay*, Vol.-VIII, Pt.-IV (1938), p. -28.
5. *Ariana Antiqua*, p.-116.

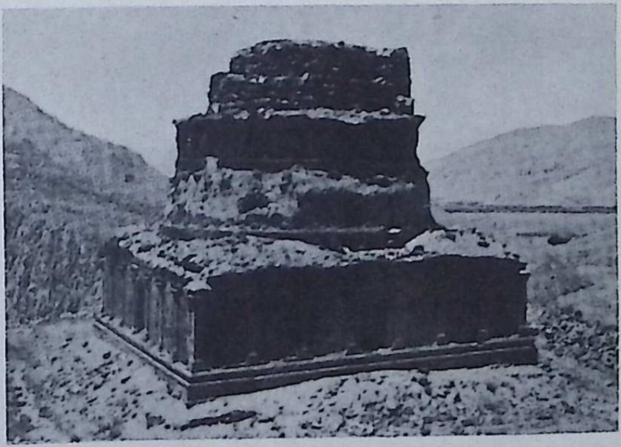

Figure 14 *Kabul:*
Guldara Stūpa with Corinthian Columns. (4th cent. A.D.).

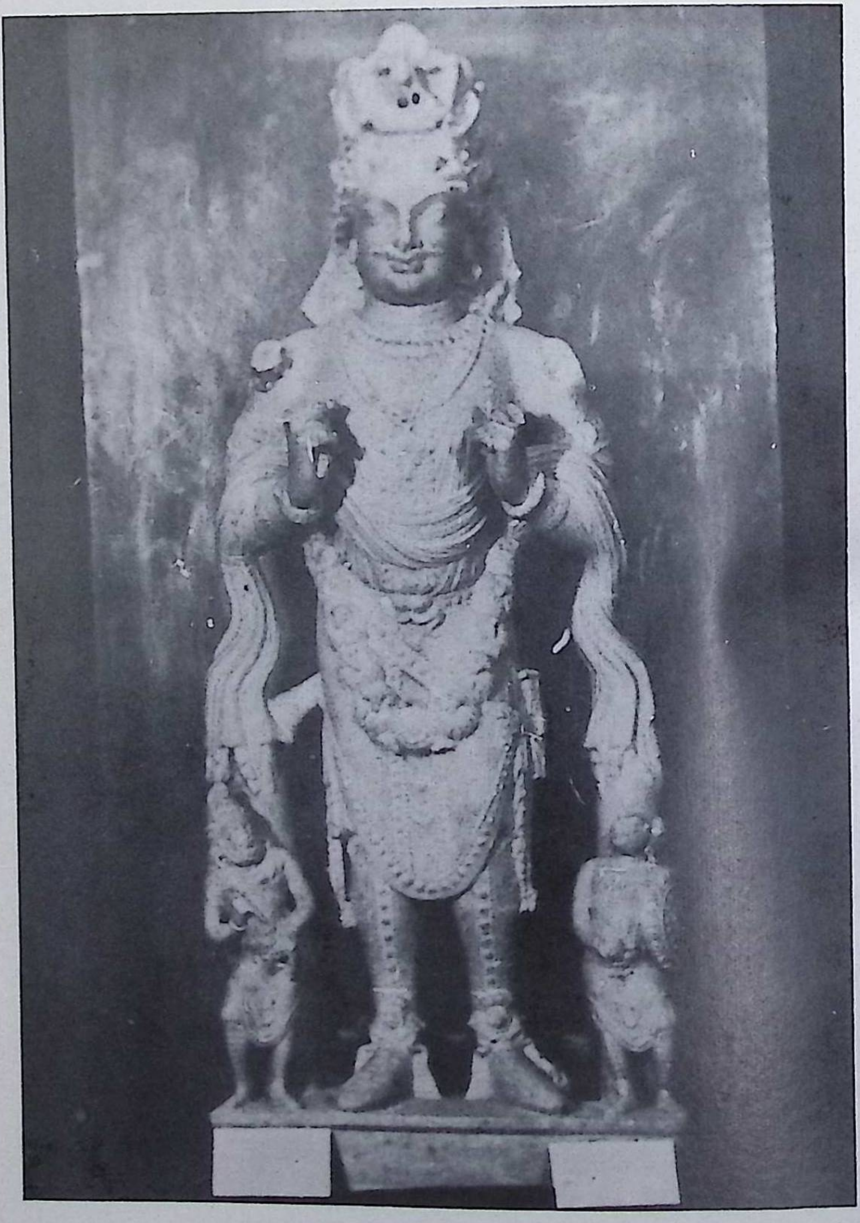

Figure 15 *Kabul:Khairkhana:*
Sūrya (Marble) (Kabul Museum) (7th-8th cent.

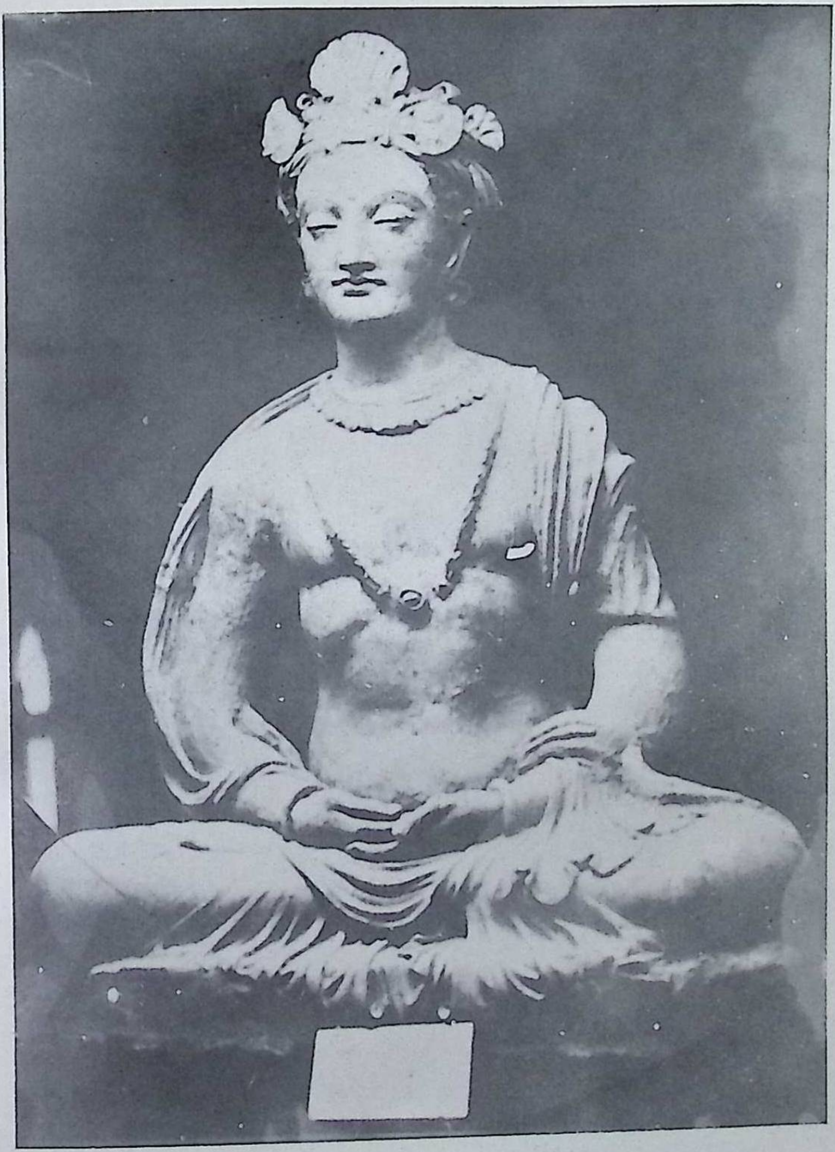

Figure 16 *Kabul:Tapa-i-Maranjan:*
Bodhisattva in Meditation (clay) (Kabul Museum)
(5th cent. A.D.)

Begram or Beghram

Near Shevaki Masson noticed a number of mounds in a village presently called Begram or Beghram. He believes it be the capital of 'Mokadphises' (Maues) and hence called 'Beghram', meaning 'the chief city'.[1] But obviously Begram is a derivative from the word *'Vihāragrāma'*, as suggested earlier, the present village was settled on or near the debris of an old *Vihāra* when it was no more in existence; and hence was given the name as *Vihāragrāma*. Some old festive traditions are still observed by the Hindus of the area at this place. Masson has observed that the Hindus of Kabul and vicinity presently celebrate on the banks of the river Loghar which winds through the meadows of Beghram, their annual festival of Vaisākha.[2] Obviously the old tradition of celebrating the threefold sacred day, the full-moon day of Vaisākha for being the Birth, Enlightenment and Mahaparinibbana day of the Buddha, is still lingering in the Hindu society there, who were once Buddhists.

Maranjan Stūpa and Monastery

Just outside the town of Kabul on the north-western side on a low hill called Maranjan, there are the ruins of a big monastic establishment. A stūpa of great dimension and a monastery were unearthed by the French Archaeologists.[3] A number of beautiful images of the Buddha, Bodhisattva, Buddhist donors and designed terracottas were recovered from them. The images are carved out in Gandhāra style. One of them representing the Bodhisattva in Dhyānamudrā is excellent.[4] These images were placed in the niches which contained 'paintings of floral designs'.[5] Numerous coins were recovered including 368 Sassanian silver Drachms and 12 gold Kusano-Sassanian coins. Among these coins majority of coins (338) are of Shapur-II (340-379 A.D.), 24 coins of Ardeshir (379-383 A.D.) and 11 coins of Shapur-III (383-388 A.D.).[6]

A small stūpa is found in the courtyard of the monastery and also a colossal statue of the Buddha of which only the enormous feet remain at present. We however do not know which school of Buddhist monks

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1. *Ibid.*, p.-116.
2. *Ibid.*, p.- 116.
3. *M.D.A.F.A.*, Tome-VIII, pp. 7-12. Recently another stūpa has been excavated and a relic-casket with inscription is unearthed from there, which is still under observation and study by the Afghan Institute of Archeology, Kabul.
4. *Ibid.*, Figure-9.
5. *Ibid.*, p.-12.
6. *Ibid.*, Figures-14 & 15.

dwelt in this monastery. It appears that the vihāra of Maranjan belonged to Mahāyāna sect as the bejewelled figure of the Bodhisattva and other devotees suggest. It is also possible that in the beginning it might have been a centre of the Mahāsāṅghikas which later became a Mahāyānī Vihāra.

Tapa-i-Khazana and Tapa-i-Balkh

At the foot of the imposing mountain Sher Darwaza, just to the south of Kabul town, the ruins of a Saṅghārāma are found, now called 'Tapa-i-Khazana' because of a stūpa erected on the rocky spur. From here a number of artefacts have been recovered which include stucco heads and beautiful terracotta pieces. They are designed in Gandhāra style[1] which suggests an early establishment of the monastery. The vihāra appears to have survived for many centuries as some fragments of clay sculptures of 5th or 6th century A.D. were also discovered from there.[2]

Another mound near Kabul is noticed at a place called 'Tapa-i-Balkh'. As the name suggests, this place might have had some relation with Balkh (ancient Bālhīka), which was once a noted centre of higher studies in Buddhism. Who knows if a Buddhist monk from Balkh might have established a Saṅghārāma at this place or some merchants from Balkh, a great centre of merchandise in ancient days, might have offered support to it; and hence its name Tapa-i-Balkh.

In fact the huge mound has never been properly explored or excavated, rather on one side it is dug for quarry purposes which indicates different strata of several periods. Some Buddhist images and coins were also found from there but we do not know their whereabouts. Some pieces of pottery bearing punch-marked designs were also recovered suggesting an early establishment of the monastery. The Saṅghārāma had once its own pond (*Pokkharaṇī*) as is evident from the depression in the middle of the square court. Considering the extensive area and the shape of the upper surface there is little doubt that once there existed a large monastery of big dimension in Kabul.[3]

As a matter of fact Kabul did not lay directly on the ancient carvan route which connected Balkh or Bactria in the west with Puruspura and Taxila in the east via Nagarahara. The route rather passed through

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1. Heras, H. : *Journal of University of Bombay*, Vol.-VI, Pt. -IV (1938), p. -27.
2. Rowland Jr., B. : *Ancient Art from Afghanistan*, (1960), p.-107.
3. Puri, Amrit Lal : *Buddhist Heritage of Afghanistan* (unpublished, only cyclostyled copy), p.- 256.

the defiles of the mountains towards the east and then to Laghman and finally reached Nagarahāra and then entered into the Indian subcontinent. The famous Chinese monk-traveller Hiuen-tsiang followed this route; and from Kapiśa he reached Nagarahāra without touching Kabul. He however visited Wardak probably because of some monk-scholars there and also to venerate the Buddha's relic enshrined in one of the stūpas. Kabul probably never gained as much importance as Kapiśa, Nagarahāra or Bamiyan. But, it does not mean that it was an insignificant centre of Buddhism. The French archaeologists Mr. A. Godard and A. Foucher have however observed the Buddhist Kabul a town inferior to Kapiśa and of a totally secondary importance.[1] But their observations may be partially correct, since the recovery of Buddha's relics from Wardak, the Tapa-i-Maranjan and Shevaki mounds relate a different story. The antiquities of these places clearly show that Buddhism was thriving in and around Kabul at least from early century of Christian Era. During the Kuṣāṇa period the Later Theravāda was zealously followed and practised by the people of this area as elsewhere in Afghanistan.

Kabul gained political importance when the Later Kuṣāṇa kings made it their capital which continued to be so for a long time. Their relation with Kabul became so intense that they were always called 'Kabul-Shah' in the inscriptions of the Sassanian monarchs.[2] Later the Turki Shahis also made it as one of their capitals; and so also their successors, the Hindu Shahis.[3] Buddhism continued to flourish in this area although the Hindu Shahi kings were the devotees of Hindu pantheon and founded the temples of Siva and Visnu. But they patronised Buddhism as well.[4] We have found an image of Mahiṣmardīni Durga inside an ancient Buddhist monastery at Tapa-i-Sardar in Ghazni, which we believe, was erected probably because of the royal persuation and support of the Hindu Shahi kings who were then ruling over this area in 8th or 9th century A.D. with their capital at Kabul. We have recovered two Ganeśa images, now worshipped in Kabul.[5] One of them is carved out of marble which was dug from the locality of Gardez in Afghanistan. It was later removed to Pir Ratana Nath

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1. Fowcher, A. : *Notes sur Itineraire de Hiuen-tsiang in Afghanistan, Studies Asiatiques,* Paris (1925), I, p.-264.
2. De Sacy : *Memoirs sur divers antiquite de la perse,* (Paris-1793) pp. 304-305.
3. Mishra, Y. : *The Hindu Shahis,* p.-6; Pande, D.B. *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab,* p.-60.
4. Mishra, Y. : *The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab,* p.-6; Pande, D.B. : *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab,* pp. 304-305.
5. Agrawal, R.C. : 'Urdhavaretas Ganesh from Afghanistan', *East and West,* N.S., Vol.-XVIII-1968, pp. 166-168.

Dargah, near Pamir Cinema Kabul. The pedestal of the image bears two line inscription in post-Gupta Brāhmī script, the language is Sanskrit. According to Dr. Tucci, the inscription may be placed to the end of 5th or beginning of 6th century A.D.[1] , whereas Dr. D.C. Sircar ascribes it to 6th or 7th century A.D.[2] Another marble image of Ganeśa was discovered from Sakar Dhar, some 10 miles from Kabul, now under worship in the Shor Bazar at Kabul itself. It is an uninscribed image but supposed to have belonged to about 4th century A.D.[3] These stray images of Ganesa indicate that Saivism was followed only by a small group of society in Afghanistan whereas Buddhism continued to be predominant in Kabul valley till its disappearance in about 10th or 11th century A.D.. The two *sthambhas*, Minar-i-Chakri and Minar-i-Shurkh on the top of the mountain which separate Kabul from Khurd Kabul show the importance of the spot, as also noted for the grandeur of its natural scenery. These two lofty pillars are the wonderous pieces of architecture in Afghanistan and no doubt they were erected to commemorate some cultural or religious event, or very likely to glorify the Buddha's Dhamma. One of them still retains the very name 'Minar-i-Chakri' or the *'Sthambha of Dhammacakra'*. It appears that Kabul gathered some importance as a religious centre in later times and then the pilgrims used to pass through it while proceeding to Kapiśa or Bamiyan in the west-north-west or to Kandahar via Bhadrayanika-vihāra at Wardak where the relics of the Buddha were enshrined.

Kabul retained its political and religious importance till the end of 10th or early 11th century when ultimately it was captured and occupied by the Ghazna ruler. The Buddhist monasteries then saw their final demolition and destruction and the Buddhist monks met with untold misery and death. The Buddhist monks either courted sword or embraced Islam, which of course, brought an end of Buddhism. Ultimately the Buddhist mass being devoid of their religious teachers and leaders and of their holy shrines and monasteries succumbed to the persecutions and hard hit injuries. As time passed Buddhism became a matter of heretical faith and Buddha became the deity of a non-Islamic person, the *Kafir*, an infidel to the Muslim society which of course had remained Buddhist for centuries in the past.

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[1] *East and West* , , Vol.-IX-1958, p.-328.

[2] E.I., Vol. -XXXV-1 (1962), p.-44 ff.

[3] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-XVIII-1968, p.-168; also see: Vol.-XXI, pp. 331-336. I am told recently that the image is missing; probably sold away to some smugglers

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BEGRAM (KAPIŚA or KAPIŚI)
Capital of Kaniṣka

Kapisá or Kapisi is one of the oldest towns of Afghanistan known to the Indian literatures of early period. Pāṇini refers to this town, as famous for its wine.[1] The grapes exported from Kapiśa were known as *Kāpiśāyani Drakṣā* and so also its wine as *Kāpiśayanī-madhu* or *surā*.[2] The ancient country, as some think, was called *Kapiśa*, extending upto modern Kohistan, south of the Hindu Kush; and its capital was known as *Kapiśi*, which is identified with modern Begram, a village that presently stands near the ancient ruins, above the confluence of the Ghorband and Panjshir rivers.[3] From the vicinity of this village an inscription in Kharoṣtī script has been found on a base-relief of a Buddha figure which reads as the name of one Antari of Kapiśa; but the reading as *Kapiśiye* in the inscription is rather doubtful since only the last letter *'ye'* of the word is visible,[4] which has since been restored as *Kapiśiye*, but it may also be restored as *Upāsikaye* or *Bharyāye*.[5]

Cyrus (550-530 B.C.), the founder of the Persian empire, is said to have destroyed the famous old city of Kapisi during his campaign.[6] General Cunnigham thinks that the third successor of Achaemenian dynasty, Darius I (522-486 B.C.) also held his sway over this area as his inscriptions mention *Thatgush*, which is to be identified with 'Opian' the area around Begram.[1]

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[1] *Aṣṭhādhyāyī*, IV. 229.

[2] Agrawala, V.S. : *India As Known to Panini*, p. 38.

[3] Cf. A. Foucher : 'Begram is identified with Kapiśa' in *BSOAS*. in VI, pp. 341 ff..

[4] The inscription reads : *Y(e) A (m) tariye daṇammuha imeṇa Kusalamūlana pituno pujaye [bhavatu]* : also Cf. Manikyala Bronze Casket Inscription - *C.I.I.*, Vol. -II, Pt.-I, pp. 150-151. Kapisa is referred to in this inscription also.

[5] Sten Konow - *E.I.*, XXII, p.-14; *J.R.A.S.*, 1933, p.-415 by J. Hackin.

[6] Roy Chaudhary, H.C. : *Political History of Ancient India*, p. -239.

Begram or Vihāragrāma

No doubt, Kapiśa was an important place, and the present ancient site of Begram where the ruins of an old town exist is of conspicuous significance. From here have been discovered the ruins of the palace of the great Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka. It was one of his metropolises in the west. Begram, being the capital city, has yielded numerous antiquities such as coins, artefacts, pieces of ivory and numerous other materials connected with royalty, and many other valuable objects.

The present name of the place as *Begrāma* is also of some importance. It appears that *Begrāma* has derived its name from the ancient word *'Vihāragrāma'*, meaning a *grāma* or village situated on or near the debris of a vihāra or Buddhist monastery. Perhaps the *grāma* or village, which was located near or over the ruins of a vihāra came to be called *Vihāra-grāma*, for the term *'vihāra'* was then present in the memory of the people. The term *'Vihāragrāma'* has since transformed into Begram. It is also interesting to note that the places by this name are invariably located near or over the ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery and frequently near the towns; for instance, there is one Begram near Kabul, the other near Jalalabad in Afghanistan. General Cunningham, however, holds another view and believes that the name Begram is a derivative from *'vigrāma'* (i.e. *visesa-grāma*), indicating the city *par excellence*, that is, the capital.[2] But his interpretation does not appear convincing, obviously holding no bearing at all since the name Begram is self-connotative relating to the term *Vihāragrāma* rather to any other term.

The Greeks in Kapiśa

It is said that Alexander the Great once established a town after his name as 'Alexandria in Caucasus' (In the Hindu Kush).[3] This town was located in the *Paropamosadae* of the Greeks, which has been derived from the Sanskrit word *'Uparisena'*, meaning the 'peak over which the eagle *(Sena)* cannot fly'.[1] Alexander the Great, on his expedition to India, had his three months winter camp at this Persian Satrapal capital, Kapiśa,[2] which has been identified with this town as established after his name in Caucacus. Ptolemy and other Greek historians also refer to this town. It is 'Karsona' of Ptolemy and 'Capisa' of Pliny, the capital of a district called Capissena.[3]

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[1] Cunningham, A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, p.-22. Cf. D.C. Sircar who however does not agree with him and takes *Thatgush* as *Shatguh* in India - *Select Inscriptions*, Vol.-I, pp.-5,7, 10, 13.

[2] Cunningham, A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, p.-25.

[3] *Ibid.*. pp. 26-27; Fox Hobbin Lane : *Alexander the Great* (1973), pp. 294-295; Dey, N.L. : *Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, p.-91; Mac-Crindle, John: *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, (1974), p.-87.

Advent of Buddhism in Kapiśa

We have seen earlier that Buddhism arrived first in Uḍyāna (eastern Afghanistan) soon after the Second Buddhist Council of Vesālī, held one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, by a group of monks known as Mahāsāṅghika. During the deliberations of this Buddhist Council one old monk Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī had played a very important role in settling the disputes that had developed in the Saṅgha on the 'Ten Points' of controversy in ecclesiastical matters. Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī was the disciple of Ānanda Thera, the 'Great Attendant' *(Upaṭṭhāka)* of the Buddha, and was one of the chief monks who had assembled in the Council to dispense with the disputed matters. It is said that those monks who did not conform to the decisions taken by the Council formed another group and separated from the Early Theravāda School of Buddhism. Probably their number was sufficiently large, some ten thousand, and hence they came to be called Mahāsāṅghika. This was the first schism in the Buddhist Saṅgha, and the Mahāsāṅghika became the second school of Buddhism.[4] It is said that two groups of this sect migrated from Magadha, one went to South India where it flourished for several centuries, as is evident from many inscriptions, there[5] and the other moved towards north-west and reached Uḍyāna.[6] The second group of the Mahāsāṅghikas probably first established its stronghold at Uḍyāna and in due course, it was again divided into five sects of which

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[1] Fox, Robi Lane : *Alexander the Great,* (1973), 296.

[2] MacCrindle, John : *India As Described in Classical Literature,* (1979) p.-87, Fox Robin Lane : *Alexander the Great,* (1973), p.-294; Rowland, B. : *Ancient Art from Afghanistan,* p.-24.

[3] *Ibid.* as above; Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism,* Vol. -II, p.-605; Cf. Cunningham A. : *Ancient Geography of India,* pp. 22-27; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* p.-54, Foot-Note.

[4] *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), pp. 416-430; *Mahāvaṃsa,* Chapter-IV & V Gieger's trans., pp. 19-26; & p.-278.

[5] Cf. Mathura Lion Capital Ins. of the time of Rajubala and Sodasa; Carle Cave Ins. of Vasiṭhiputra - *Select Inscriptions* Vol. -I by D.C. Sircar, pp. 199-211; etc.

[6] Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India,* p.-68.

Lokuttaravādin was one, which established its centre at Bamiyan and flourished there for a long time.

Sambhūta Sāṇavāsi, whose main place of 'residence' was at Mathura, is said to have lived at 'Kipin' for some time.[1] Kipin has generally been identified with Kapisa.[2] Hiuen-tsiang records that the hemp robe in nine parts dyed in red and the pot of Sanakavāsa (i.e. Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī) were preserved in a vihāra not far from Bamiyan (not too far away from Kapiśa) and he paid homage to these relics.[3] It appears that the Mahāsāṅghikas were successful in becoming predominant in Uḍyāna; and so Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī had to move further west in Afghanistan to Kapiśa in order to counteract them and to propagate the views of Early Theravāda Buddhism. The influence and spread of the Mahāsāṅghikas to whom he had so vehemently opposed could be checked only to some extent. Truly it appears that Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī was the first Buddhist monk who arrived at Kipin or Kapiśa and started propagating the Early Theravāda Buddhism there. As such Kapiśa was the first place where the *Vibhajjavāda* or Early Theravāda Buddhism took its root in Afghanistan. Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī probably was also successful in establishing some other centres near Bamiyan. We have referred to above that Hiuen-tsiang witnessed the robe and the bowl used by him preserved in a vihāra near Bamiyan. Probably it was Ahangaran in Foladi valley where he established a centre. We know that Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī was an *Arahanta* (emancipated person), and the present name of the place as 'Āhaṅgaran' appears to be a derivative of the word *Arahantānam*, meaning, a place of the Arahantas. Probably the place got this name on account of this Arahanta, Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī. We do not know the name of any other saint who had come to this area except Arahanta Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī.

Shotorak in Begram, the Monastic Centre

Near Begram, Shotorak is a place where the ruins of ancient Buddhist monasteries and shrines have been excavated by the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan.[4] The place has yielded the ruins of a dozen stūpas, innumerable antiquities including very many icons, images of the Buddha, panels of life scenes of the Buddha, his

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1. Watters T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p.-121; Cf. *Divyāvādāna*, Mathura as the residence of Sāṇavāsī: Chapter-XXVI, p.-216.
2. Dey, N.L. : *Dict. of An. & Med. India*, p.-91.
3. Watters, T. : *Op. cit.*; p.-120; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 52-53; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53.
4. Cf. *Shotorak* by J. Meunie - *M.D.A.F.A.* - Vol. - X, Paris (1942).

Mahābhiniskramaṇa, base reliefs depicting Jataka scenes, Maitreya figures etc.. A seated figure of the Buddha in penance, with sunken belly and bony body and with the sinews coming up[1] is excellent besides many other pieces of sculptural art. Yet another base relief depicting the Jaṭila Uruvela worshipping the Buddha, along with his two brothers accompanied with a disciple is also noteworthy.[2] The plan of the monasteries at Shotorak follows the same pattern as that found at Taxila and elsewhere. The antiquities discovered from them belong to the early Christian Era, of about 1st or 2nd century, and thus Shotorak evidently became a great centres of Buddhism at a very early period.

It is remarkable to note that while the Begram site has yielded the ruins of a palace and objects of aristocratic nature, Shotorak being a monastic site has yielded only the religious objects. The present name of the place as Shotorak is itself meaningful as it is the transformation of the word *'Sthaviraka',* i.e. the place of a *sthavira* or 'elderly monk.' Obviously the place got its name after being the residence of a some very important *Sthavira,* an old senior monk. Who was this *Sthavira* or the great Buddhist saint is difficult to say; but may we presume that it was Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī, the first *Sthavira* who made it a place of his 'residence' for the propagation of Early Theravāda Buddhism in this area? Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī was a *sthavira* in the real sense as he was an *Arahanta* of 120 years of age at the time of the Second-Buddhist Council, held at Vesali one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha. He was one of the senior-most monks in the Buddhist Saṅgha of his time.[3] It may not be too hazardous to presume that Shotorak or *'Sthaviraka'* came to be so called after this *Sthavira* of eminence. If our presumption be taken as true, Kapiśa was the first place where Early Theravāda Buddhism began to take its root in Afghanistan in a missionary way, as Uḍyāna became the first centre of the Mahāsāṅghika school of Buddhism. Shotorak or *'Sthaviraka'* monastery developed as an important centre of Theravāda Buddhism in Kapiśa at a very early date and continued to be so for several centuries. Hiuen-tsiang records that about three or four *li* from the capital (Kapiśa) under the north mountain was a large monastery with over 300 brethren, all Hīnayānīs. He also relates a story of the Chinese princes of Han dynasty who were made hostages to the Kuṣāṇa emperor, Kaniṣka. A monastery was built by Kaniṣka for their use, where they used to spend their summer. The monks of this monastery

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1. *M.D.A.F.A.*, Paris (L842), Plate-XVI. 53, XVII, 45.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. -X, Plate-XIX, XX; Cf. B. Rowland : *Ancient Art from Afghanistan*, p.-70.
3. Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.-1063; Cf. *Çullavagga* (Nalanda), p.-420.

used to hold religious functions on behalf of the hostages at the start of the *Vassāvāsa* (Rainy-Season Resort, which falls on the full-moon day of Āṣāḍha) and at the end of it (i.e. *Pavāraṇā,* on the full-moon day of Kattika). There was a shrine of the Buddha in the monastery.[1] Hiuen-tsiang calls this place *'Sha-lo-ka'* or *'She-lo-kia'.* Samuel Beal restored it as *Sarikar vihāra,* meaning Chinese vihāra,[2] while Jullian took it to be *Sharakar* and identified it with Charikar.[3] It has since been finally identified with Shotorak, the place where the monastery for the Chinese hostages was built by Kaniṣka.[4] It was a magnificient monastery embellished with frescoes. That Kaniṣka chose to erect a monastery for the Chinese prince hostages at *She-lo-kia* or Shotorak is of significance and it affirms our presumption that it was the oldest monastery of the place erected much before Kaniṣka. And, in all probability, Shotorak had already gained importance on account of the vihara of Sthavira Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī, the first missionary monk who propagated the Early Theravāda Buddhism in Afghanistan. No doubt, Shotorak played a very important role in the early history of Buddhism in the country. Copious finds of Buddhist antiquities and numerous architectural buildings like vihāras, temples, stūpas and shrines, all belonging to early Christian Era, tend to suggest that Shotorak was a great centre of Buddhism from the very early days. Begram or Kapiśa was the capital, a township, while Shotorak was the religious or monastic centre at least during the time of Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka, if not earlier.

Aśoka and Kapiśa

We have seen above that early Theravāda Buddhism had started taking its root at Shotorak in Kapiśa through the zealous efforts of Sthavira Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī about one hundred years after the death of the Buddha. We also know that the Kapiśa region, then called Paropanasadae, was ceded to Mauryan emperor, Candragupta by Seleucus along with other parts of this state which lay in Afghanistan. Candragupta is said to have leanings towards Jainism rather than

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of Western World,* pp. 55-60; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang,* p.-54; Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels,* pp. 124-125.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* pp. 57-58 Foot-Note 203; Cf. Julian : *Memoirs,* II, pp. 439, 903; *J.R.A.S.* (N.S.) XIII (1881), p. -57.

[3] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* pp. 57-58, 358. Watters took it as *Salaka* meaning 'Small Mansion' used in the sense of 'temporary royal residence', *Op. Cit.,* pp. 124-125.

[4] See : *The National Museum of Afghanistan; An Illustrated Guide,* by N.H. Dupree, Louis Dupree and A.A. Motamedi (1974) p.-61; Cf. Rosenfield, J.M. : *Dynastic Arts of the Kushana,* p.-32, 'stone bowl', figure-130.

Buddhism and so also his son and successor Bindusāra who appears to have been more interested in Ājivika religion under the influence of an Ājivika fortune-teller who was the resident in his court. This Ājivika is said to have prophesied that his son Aśoka would become an emperor.[1] Although we have no knowledge about the condition of Buddhism in Kapiśa during these two Mauryan rulers, it appears feasible that Buddhism had since begun sprouting earlier in the centres first established by the Mahāsāṅghikas and then by Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī. The Mahāsāṅghika school probably had the upper hand and had its sway more to the east while Early Theravāda Buddhism established by Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī had its strides in the Foladi valley at Ahangarana near Bamiyan and Kapiśa.

The religious activities of Aśoka and his zeal to support Buddhism are well known. The Convention of the Third Buddhist Council held at Pāṭaliputra in the seventeenth year of his reign is an epoch-making event in the history of Buddhism, when Buddhist missionaries led by eminent Buddhist monk-saints were despatched to distant parts of his kingdom and abroad. The names of these monk-saints as given in the *Mahāvaṃsa* and the *Dīpavamsa* are as follows : Majjhantika to Kaśmīra and Gandhāra (or to Gandhāra only, not Kaśmīra according to the *Dīpavaṃsa, VIII*-4), Mahādeva to Mahismaṇḍala, Rakkhita to Vanavāsī, Yonaka Dhammarakkhita to Aparanta, Mahādhammarakkhita to Mahāraṭṭha, Maharakkhita to Yona country, Majjhima to Himavanta, Soṇa and Uttara to Suvaṇṇabhūmi and Mahinda to Laṅkā.[2] Here it is remarkable to note that while one missionary was put in charge for the dissemination of the *Saddharma* to one region, two missionaries were despatched to the North-west regions led by two monk-saints instead of one. Thera Majjhantika led his mission to Gandhāra and Thera Mahārakkhita to Yona Country, both to N.W. region. Yona country comprised the region around Kapiśa upto Balkh in Afghanistan, where Greek settlements were in existence since Alexander the Great. The despatch of two missionaries to the North-west regions instead of one is of conspicuous significance. We have discussed earlier that the Mahāsāṅghikas had already established their strongholds in Uḍyāna and probably had become more powerful than the Early Theravāda centres established at Kapiśa and elsewhere by Arahanta Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī. It appears that probably in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas and at the same time to boost the Early Theravāda Buddhism, already established at Kapiśa and elsewhere, the exigency was felt to despatch two missionaries to this side instead of one.

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[1] *Divyavadana* (Mithila) XXVI, pp. 233-234 - *Pingalavatsajivah Paribrajakah;* Cowell : p. -370.

[2] *Dipavamsa* - VIII; *Mahavamsa* - XII.

The selection of Yonaka Dhammarakkhita as a leader of a mission to Aparanta also deserves some consideration. As his name suggests, he hailed from the Yona country, certainly from some part of Afghanistan where he had received his initiation and training into Buddhism before coming to India, and then came to Pātaliputra probably to accomplish himself in the Religion. That Yonāka Dhammarakkhita was selected out of a thousand 'able' and 'learned' monks who had assembled as the participants on the occasion of the Third Buddhist Council, as a leader of a missionary party points to his spiritual character and sagacity. His deputation, though being a foreigner, to Aparanta as the leader of a party of saints, distinguishes him as a great siant and scholar of the Dhamma. His knowledge of Pali scriptures was certainly deep and thorough. We are told that when he arrived at Aparanta, he preached the *Aggikhandhopamasutta* (A *Sutta* from the *Aṅguttaranikāya*-IV, p.-128 ff.) which stresses upon the purity of the life of a monk, and by his preaching some 'thirty seven thousand persons joined the Saṅgha as monks'. In the *Dīpavaṃsa,* he is praised as *'Mahamati'*, a 'great wise'.[1] His extraordinary achievements and spiritual proficiency and competence tend to indicate that he had had a long-standing training and practice in Buddhism, which he probably got in his motherland in the beginning and later attained prominence when he came to India. In his own country his initial training should have been possible only at a centre of Early Theravāda School. We have seen above that Kapiśa was the only centre where this school was first established by Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī more than a century ago. Indeed it appears plausible that Yonaka Dhammarakkhita might have got his ordination and training in this school of Buddhism at a centre in Kapiśa, a place of Yona population at that time. And if so, his *Pabbajjā* might have taken place at Shotorak, the monastic area of Kapiśa, which was once established and occupied by Sthavira Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī.

Aśoka patronised the Vibhajjavāda or Early Theravāda taking it as the true form of Buddhism. He was aware of the strongholds of the Mahāsāṅghikas in Uḍyāna and elsewhere and their influence in the area and also of the Early Theravāda centres at Kapiśa or at Ahangarana where it was not so firmly rooted. Thera Mahārakkhita arrived in the Yona country where he delivered the *Kāḷakārāmasutta*

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[1] *Dīpavaṃsa*-VIII-7.

(A *Sutta* from the *Aṅguttaranikaya*-II.27), which describes the Tathāgata as one who knows and comprehends whatever is seen, heard, comprised, attained, or searched into, etc. in the whole world, but he is not subject to it. Mahārakkhita is described as an *'Isi'* (saint) (*Mahāvamsa*-XII-39), a holyman gifted with a special power of insight and endowed with great supernatural powers, *Mahiddhika* (*Dīpavaṃsa*-VIII-3). By his preachings, it is said, one hundred and seventy thousand people attained the 'reward of the path of salvation' (*Magga* and *Phala*) and ten thousand received their ordination on this occasion.[1] These figures may not be taken as accurate but no doubt a large number of people were converted to Early Theravāda Buddhism and many entered into the Saṅgha as monks. It also suggests that due to Aśoka's zealous efforts this school of Buddhism received a further impetus at Kapiśa since it had been earlier introduced by Sambhūta Sanavasi at Shotorak. It appears that in course of time this place became a stronghold of the Early Theravāda school of Buddhism. An early Buddhist Kharostī inscription on a clay was recovered from Begram from the first layer which is ascribed to 3rd or 2nd century B.C.. J. Harmatta has read a Buddhist name on it.[2] The inscription suggests an early spread of Buddhism in this area which confirms our view that Buddhism had reached Kapiśa quite early and flourished there for centuries.

Menander & Kapiśa

As a matter of fact, after the disintegration of the Mauryan empire Afghanistan came under the rule of the Yavanas or Greeks of Bactria, also known as Indo-Greeks or Indo-Bactrians. They ruled over the whole of Afghanistan and also over the territories of western Pakistan and further east up to Mathura or even beyond, for about one hundred fifty years.[3] These Yavanas or Greeks were not necessarily Hellenic Greeks but they were the descendants of early settlers from the time of Alexander the Great. These Indo-Greek kings are usually known by their coins alone and they number forty-one in all. Very little is known about them from the Greek or Roman classical writers who seem to have no knowledge of any king of Baktra (Bactria). It is only one king, named Menander (Pali-Milinda), who is known to Indian literatures with frequent mention there.[1] The *Millindapañho* is the famous Pali text which records the philosophical discussions that took place between king Milinda (Menander) and Buddhist monk Nāgasena. It also informs us that Milinda was born in a town called 'Kalasigāma' (*Jātanagara*) in the country (*Dīpa*) called 'Alasanda' (Alexandria), which was 200 *yojanas* from Sāgala (Sialkot in Pakistan), the place of their discussion.[2] Alasanda of the *Mlindapañho* has since been identified with 'Alexandria in Caucasus', i.e. Paropanasadae[3] and the city Kalasigāma with Kapiśa, now Begram.[4] Obviously Alasanda as a *Dīpa* refers to a country just as we have Jambudīpa, another name of India, and so also Kalasigāma should be taken as the name of a town, not of a 'village', as some have rendered.[5] We know the names of some towns ending with *'gāma'* or *'grāma'*, for instance, Ramagāma, the capital of the Koliyas.[6]

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[1] *Cf. Mahāvaṃsa* -XII. 40 - *Pāṇasatasahassāni, Sahassāni ca Sattati, Maggaphalam papuṇimsu, dasasahassāni pabbajumsu.*

[2] Harmatta J. : *Sino-India*, pp. 4-5.

[3] Narain A.K. : *From Alexander to Kanishka*, p.-9; also, *The Indo-Greeks*, Chapter-II. For *Yavanas* see *Ibid.*, Appendix-I. For their expansion of kingdom see : G.R. Sharma : *Reh Inscription of Menander and the Indo-Greek Invasion of the Ganga Valley*, Section-Two, p. -12 ff.

It has been pointed out by some scholars that the legend as *'Kavishiye (Nagara) devata'* occuring on the copper coin of Eucratides refers to the 'City-deity of Kapiśi'.[7] General Cunningham however identifies Kapiśa with *Karasana* as given by Ptolemy and believes that the legend is *'Kariśiye nagara'* or "city of Karisi", which he connects with Kalasi of the *Milindapañho*, the birth place of king Menander in Alasanda or Alexandria, the capital of the Yonas or the Greeks. He further emphasises that Kalasi must have been Alexandria itself or some place close to it, and the latter agrees exactly with the position of Begram which is only a few miles to the east of Opian (Alexandria).[8] In the accounts of Chinese travellers Kapiśa has been recorded as 'Kipin'.

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1. Narain A.K. : *From Alexander to Kanishka*, p.-9; Davids Rhys : *The Question of King Milinda*, Introduction, pp. 4-5.
2. *"Kuhim pana Mahārājā tava jātabhūmi" ti? "Atthi, Bhante. Alasando nāma dīpo tattha ahaṃ jato" ti. "Kīva dūro, Mahārājā, ito Alasando hoti" ti "Dvimatlāni, Bhante, yojanasatāni" ti.-Milindapañho, III .7.* 4 & 5; Trans. T.W. Rhys Davids : *The Questions of King Milinda*, pp. 126-129.
3. *Cambridge History of India-I*, p.-550; W. Gieger: Trans. *Mahāvaṃsa*, p.-194-Foot-Note 3; I.B. Horner : *Milinda's Questions*, p.-114, foot-note 2; A.K. Narain : *The Indo-Greeks*, p.-74.
4. Cf. A. Foucher - *B.S.O.A.S.-VI*, pp.341-348; G.P. Malalsekera : *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, 344; *Cambridge History of India-I*, p.-550 and others.
5. Rhys Davids' trans. *The Questions of King Milinda*, Pt.-1, p.-127; I.B. Horner : *Milinada's Questions*, Vol.-I, p.-114.
6. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-I, p.-689.
7. *Punjab Museum Catalogue*, Plate-III, 131; *British Museum Catalogue*, Plate-VI, 8.
8. Cunningham A. : *Ancient Geography of India*, (1983) p.-24.

Some think that, as the city of Kalasi must have been close to Alexandria (of Caucasus), its identity is probably implied in the name *'Kapisi'*, which, through a copyist's error, is named in the Pali manuscript as *'Kalasi'*, the home of Menander.[1] Should we take this presumption as correct, the home of Menander should have been at Kapiśa, the modern Begram. It has been generally accepted that Paropanisadae area, in which the modern Begram, Shotorak, Paitava, Charikar etc. are located, was under the possession of Menander,[2] although some do not agree.[3] And as such, Menander should have had some elementary knowledge of Buddhism prior to his discussions with Bhikkhu Nāgasena at Sagala. He professed Buddhism as his personal faith, and followed Early Theravāda which he patronized with full zeal and devotion. In the *Milindapañho* he calls himself a 'pupil' of Thera Nāgasena, and the latter his 'teacher'. He says, "Elder is clever. Should there be a teacher such as he is and a pupil such as I am, a clever person would soon learn Dhamma."[4] He is said to have acquired the knowledge of many *'Śāstras'* (arts and sciences) as enumerated nineteen including the *Buddha-vacana*, i.e. the *Tipiṭaka*,[5] which is significant. This tends to suggest that probably he had acquired the basic knowledge of Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda Buddhism, perhaps of other schools of Buddhism too, such as, the Mahāsāṅghika school which was already flourishing in his homeland. With the knowledge of different kinds of learning, Menander was naturally keen to understand and to acquire a deeper knowledge of higher philosophical thoughts. His quest for deep knowledge is embodied in the *Milindapañho* as noticed by his philosophical questions that he puts to Bhikkhu Nāgasena, one of the most eminent monk-scholars of his time. Thera Nāgasena was a profound scholar of Early Theravāda Buddhism; and by his deep learning and practice in Buddhism and also by his lucid eloquence, he managed to quench the thirst of deeper inquiry of King Milinda, to his entire satisfaction.[6] Menander thereupon became a 'lay-follower' of Buddhism although he had his wish to become a 'homeless' (Bhikkhu), which was rather impossible in his case for he had 'many enemies'.[1] That Menander was a Buddhist is also evident from his coins on which he has adopted the symbols of *'Cakra'*, 'lion' and 'elephant' representing Buddha and Buddhism and also the appellation *'Dhramikas'* (*Dhārmikasya*) in Kharostī script, exclusively used by the Buddhists.

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[1] Foucher A. , *B.S.O.A.S.*, VI, p. -341-348; Cf. *Encyclopaedia of uddhism*, Vol. -II, p.-606.

[2] Narain A.K. : *The Indo-Greeks*, pp. 77-78.

[3] Tarn W.W. : *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p.-228.

[4] *"Āma, Bhante, paṇḍito Thero. Ediso ācariyo bhaveyya, mādiso ca antevasi, na cirasseva paṇḍito dhammam ājaneyya"* -*Milinda-panho*, Ed. Swami Dwarrika Das Shastri (1979) , p.-71; I.B. Horner's trans., *Milinda's Questions*, Vol.-I, p.-122.

[5] *Milindapañho*, Ibid., p.-3 -*Bahūni cassa satthāni uggahitāni hoti; seyyathidam -suti, sammuti, sañkhya, yogo, nīti, visesika, gaṇikā, gandhabba, tikiccha, catubbeda, purana, itihasa, jotisa, maya, ketu, mantana, yuddha, chandasa, buddha-vacanena ekūnavīsati.*

[6] Cf. *"Sabbam maya supucchitam, sabbam bhadantena Nagasenena suvissajjitam"*, ("Well indeed I have asked, and well indeed Bhadanta Nagasena answered") -

We do not know much about his religious activities, but his zeal towards Buddhism was no doubt intense. He might have erected viharas, caityas and other shrines in his kingdom. Kapiśa was already a centre of Early Theravāda Buddhism and it is likely that Menander might have taken some measures to develop the Religion at his birthplace. Some stūpas and vihāras might have been erected by him at Kapiśa. Shotorak is the site in Begram where Kaniṣka erected a vihāra for the Chinese prince hostages. It may not be improbable if some of the stūpas and monasteries excavated from there might have been the creation of Menander. It has been rightly suggested by some that before the rule of Kaniṣka, Begram was a great Buddhist centre; and so Buddhism spread further west into Central Asia during Graec-Bactrian rule in Afghanistan.[2] Begram should have thus played a very important role in the expansion of Buddhism during the days of Menander, the great Buddhist king.

No doubt, Early Theravāda was in a flourishing state in Kapiśa and elsewhere in Afghanistan during the time of Menander, He is said to have come to the throne 500 years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha[3] and is usually placed between 155-130 B.C.[4] It is interesting to find an account in the *Mahāvaṃsa* which relates that some monks from 'Pallavabogga' and 'Alasanda' were invited to Sri Lanka on the occasion of the Foundation Laying Ceremony of the Mahāthūpa at Anurādhapura during the reign of Duṭṭhagāmanī Abhaya, who ruled Sri Lanka from 101 B.C. to 77 B.C.[5] It is recorded there that monks from different countries were present on this occasion, besides those from all over Sri Lanka including the 'wise' Mahādeva from 'Pallavabhogga'

Milindapañho, Ed. by Swami Dwarika Das Shastri (Buddhabharati), Varanasi (1979), p.-72.

[1] *"Sace aham, Bhante, agārasmā anāgariyaṃ pabbajjeyyaṃ, na ciraṃ jiveyyāmi, bahu me paccatthikā" ti.* - Ibid., p.-72.

[2] Litivinsky, B.Ya : *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.* (1970), p. -58.

[3] *Milindapañho*, Ed. Swami Dwarika Das Shastri, Varanasi (1979), p.-2.

[4] Narain A.K. : *The Indo-Greeks*, p.-77 foot-note No.-2.

[5] Geiger W. : *The Mahāvaṃsa* (Tr.), Introduction, p. -XXXVII. This date is accepted by W. Rahul : *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, (1957), p.-80; also Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-I, p.-1093.

with four hundred and sixty thousand Bhikkhus and Yona Mahādhammarakkhita from 'Alasanda' with thirty thousand monks.[1] The number of the monks is obviously exaggerated, but certainly a good number of monks from these countries attended the foundation laying ceremony. We also know that Early Theravāda Buddhism has been predominant in Sri Lanka throughout the history of the country. But what matters most is that Sri Lanka also maintained its cultural contacts with all those countries where Early Theravāda Buddhism was followed. 'Alsanda', as we have seen above, was the 'Alexandria of Caucasus' in Paropanasadae, the modern Begram area, the ancient Kapisa; and 'Pallavabhogga' has been associated with the country (*Bhoga*) of Pahlavas or Parthians, who are usually designated as 'Indo-Parthians' who have settled and ruled over North-Western region of India and inner Afghanistan.[2] This information of the *Mahāvaṃsa* cannot be discarded outright as the authenticity of the *Mahāvaṃsa* has been firmly established. Wilhem Gieger rightly observes, "Whatever material the text contains is based much upon the older material available to the author and; hence whenever it has been possible to verify the information in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, that information has proved correct."[3] This account of the *Māhāvaṃsa* endorses the fact that during the days of Menander and even some time after, Kapiśa was a centre of Early Theravāda Buddhism, where monks from different countries were dwelling in the monasteries. That Kapiśa maintained its religious contacts with other countries outside through these monks is significant which also points to the cosmopolitan character of the Buddhist Saṅgha. No doubt Kapiśa was an important religious centre and so, the monks from this place were invited to Sri Lanka to attend a religious function held on the occasion of foundation laying ceremony of the Mahāthūpa. Thera Yona Mahādhammarakkhita who led the delegation of 'thirty thousand monks of much erudition and piety', was a great pious Buddhist saint of Kapisa. We know another Yona Dhammarakkhita from the *Mahavamsa* who also led a mission to Aparanta for the dissemination of Buddhism during the reign of Asoka that we have seen earlier. No doubt Kapiśa was a centre of Early Theravāda Buddhism where great learned monks resided.

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1. *Mahāvaṃsa*, Chapter-XXIX, pp. 38-40; *Dīpavaṃsa*, Chapter-XIX, p.-5.
2. Gieger W. : *Mahāvaṃsa* (Trans.), p.-194, Foot-note, 2. He relates Pallava with the Persians, Skt. Pahlava. Also Cf. *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, p.-61.
3. Gieger W. : *Mahāvaṃsa* (trs), Introduction, p.- IX-XX.

Kaniṣka & Kapiśa

Kaniṣka was a great Buddhist emperor, probably next only to Aśoka, who patronized Buddhism with much zeal and enthusiasm and devotion. He is said to have followed the Sarvāstivāda school, a branch of Later Theravāda Buddhism. A Buddhist Council, generally known as 'Fourth Buddhist Council' was convened during his period at Kuṇḍalavana in Kaśmīra in which the *Vibhāṣāśāstra* was composed. Kapiśa was one of his capitals in the western part of his empire. He had built a palace there, the ruins of which including some residential buildings have been excavated at Begram; and conspicuously enough, no material of religious importance has been found from here except one panel depicting the *Dharmacakra* surmounted by *Triratna* flanked by two *Kalaśas,* each containing three foliages, and bordered with a vine creeper. Obviously it was a devotional panel fixed somewhere by some private person for *Pujā.*[1] As a matter of fact, the monastic area was located a little away from there, at Shotorak, about which we have referred to earlier.

We have little knowledge of the religious activities of Kaniṣka in this area. It is only the accounts of Hiuen-tsiang which refer to the construction of a vihāra and a temple at Kapiśa for the use of the Chinese prince hostages of Han dynasty.[2] When Hiuen-tsiang arrived at Kapiśa, he stayed in a monastery belonging to Hīnayāna school which he calls *'Sha-lo-kia'* by name, which was built by Kaniṣka for the Chinese hostages. The resident monks of this monastery requested him to stay with them and entreated him in these words, "Our temple was originally founded by the son of Han emperor, and now, as you come from that country, you might like to stay first with us." Hiuen-tsiang accepted their request and stayed in that temple although there were" some hundred or so religious foundations and each convent was wishing to induce him to stay there'.[3]

The above description of Hiuen-tsiang points to the fact that during the time of Kaniṣka, *Sha-lo-kia,* i.e. Shotorak *(Sthaviraka)* received the patronage of Kaniṣka. The antiquities recovered from Shotorak mostly belong to this period, about which we have mentioned earlier.

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[1] Hackin J. : *Begram, M.D.A.F.A.,* Vol.-IX (1939), No.-2, fig.-298, Plate-LXXVIII.

[2] Beal S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang,* pp. 54-56.

[3] Ibid., p.-54; Cf. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World* Bk.-II, p.-55; Walters T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels,* p.-123.

Sarvāstivāda & Kaniska & Kapiśa

That Kaniṣka patronized the School of Sarvāstivāda is confirmed by many sources, both literary and epigraphical. A number of inscriptions referring to Sarvāstivāda have been discovered from Indian subcontinent. We know that Saravastivada is a branch of Mahāsāṅghika School of Buddhism which holds the view that *Nāma* (mind) and *Rūpa* (matter) are 'real' and are divisible into 64 elements, which 'exist for ever' *(sarvamasti);* and hence this name. It is generally believed that this School of Buddhism rose soon after the Second Buddhist Council and established its main centre at Mathura and became popular there. It also spread outside India and held much influence on Central Asia and China.[1] Its origin is generally placed sometime after the Mahāsāṅghikas who had been able to establish one of their strongholds at Uḍyāna, besides some other places in the country.[2] It is also known that another branch of the Sarvāstivādins was called Vaibhāṣika, which gained popularity during the time of Kaniṣka and became predominant in Kaśmīra and Gandhāra and other North-western regions.[3] It appears that while the early Sarvāstivādins were confined to northern part of India near Mathura, Sarnath etc., the Vaibhāṣika School took its root in North-western part of India and even beyond. Professor Takakusu has rightly observed that after the compilation of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* during the Fourth Buddhist Council in Kaśmīra under the patronage of Kaniṣka, the Sarvāstivādins were later known only as Vaibhāṣika.[4] Both had their *Piṭakas* in Sanskrit language. In the *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya*[5] and in the *Divyāvadāna* [6] and also in the Chinese version of the *Aśokāvadāna*[7] the story of the origin of Sarvāstivādins has occurred. It is said there that Buddha once made a forecast that one Sanakavasi by name would become a monk and he would build a vihāra at Rurumunda mountain in Mathura and would ordain Upagupta, who would be a great exponent of this school. This Upagupta occupies a very high place in the hierarchy of the Sarvāstivādin school and is described as a versatile preacher and writer of Vaibhāṣika school of Mathura, who succeeded his preceptor Sanakavāsī.[8] Upagupta is said to have been

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1. Dutta N. : *Buddhist Sects in India,* pp. 136-137.
2. *Ibid.,* p.-136.
3. *Ibid.,* p.-136.
4. *J.P.T.S.,* 1904-1905, p.-119.
5. *Gulgit Manuscripts,* pt.-III, pt.-I.
6. *Divyāvādāna* (Mithila), Chapter-26, p.-216 ff.
7. Cf. Dutta N. : *Buddhist Sects in India,* p.-135.
8. *Ibid.,* p.-137.

the teacher of Vasubandhu. The Vaibhāṣika school of Mathura appears to have influenced Kaniṣka as he extended his full support and patronage to this school. It also appears that the first centre of Kipin or Kapiśa established by Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī, Vasubandhu's teacher's teacher, was in a flourishing condition during the time of Kaniṣka, very likely as a centre of Vaibhāṣikas or Sarvāstivādins although not as that of Early Theravāda school. Kaniṣka certainly added at least one Saṅghārāma if not more to this place exclusively meant for the purpose of the Chinese prince hostages. The site for this Saṅghārāma should have been at Shotorak, the monastic complex of Kapiśa, that we have seen above. The Buddhist antiquities unearthed from there stand as a testimony to this fact. Probably after the Fourth Buddhist Council held under the patronage of Kaniṣka, this centre of Kapiśa became as important for the Vaibhāṣika school as Mathura in the mainland of India. The sculptural art of the period found from Shotorak bears a close affinity with the Buddhist antiquities of this period found from Mathura and elsewhere. The depiction of the Jātaka stories, the images of Maitreya and other Bodhisattvas, the Jataka scenes of Vessantara and Dipaṅkara, the Jaṭila brothers worshipping the Buddha, Buddha with Tapassu and Bhallika, and such other sculptural representations[1] display Buddhist traditions similar to those followed elsewhere during the period. The Vessantara Jataka and Jaṭila brothers scenes may be compared with the similar scenes on the Gateways of Sanchi.[2]

Ruins of Begram

The ruins of Begram (Kipin or Kapiśa) represent three stages of its construction. The first appears to have followed a similar lay out plan as noticed in the Hellenistic centres, belonging to the period when Alexander first founded it, and which also remained the capital of the Indo-Greek kings who ruled over this area. The second phase of construction includes new palaces and fortifications in a modified fashion by the Kuṣāṇas; being the western capital of Kaniṣka and his successors. And the third or the upper most layer is the final settlement which arose probably after the devastations caused by the Sassanans under Shapur I in 241 A.D. as there are some evidences of the violent destruction of the town by fire.[1] It is also believed that the town was abandoned for the last time only after the advent of the Hẹpathalites or Hūṇas sometime in fifth century A.D. The town however, continued to exist but only as an insignificant city upto 8th or 9th century A.D. Buddhism flourished as the religion of the place and received the patronage of the Turky Kings, even in later periods too.[2]

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[1] Cf. Hackin J. : *Indian Art and L. Watters*, Vol.-XII, No.-1, p.-47; *Reserches Archaeologiques a Begram*, M.D.A.F.A., Tome-IX; X; Meunie J. : *Shotorak*, M.D.A.F.A., Tome-VIII; Rosenfield John M. : *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, also see *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Part-I & II; published by E.J. Brill, Leiden (1976).

[2] Marshal J. : *Sanchi*, Vol.-I, p. -122 for Vessantara Jātaka and p.-210 (for Jaṭila representation on Eastern Gateway).

We have mentioned earlier that Begram was a residential area of the royalty, and so the antiquities recovered from there include coins, glass materials, ivory with elegant carvings representing Indian style, terra-cotta objects, beads and such other objects. Masson recovered from there a large number of coins of Menander, Apollodotus, Eucratides, Anitalkides, Azes-Hermius, Agathocles, Pantaleon, Wim Kadphises, and Kaniṣka.[3] In fact, the antiquities include many objects of arts in Indian, Greek and Chinese traditions. Of these, the miniature carvings on ivories are elegant and superb, which represent the scenes of lovely women in their many hair styles, massaging, playing with pets, playing hide and seek, and such other scenes; and are supposed to be one of the finest skilful art products of all times. The date of the ivory carvings is supposed to be of the end of 1st century or the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., the period of Kaniska. Some are of the opinion that Kaniṣka inherited these ivory pieces of art from the previous rulers. But in all probability, these were brought to the capital at Kapiśa by Kaniṣka himself who was a paramount ruler of a large territory which included parts of China, Central Asia, Afghanistan and India.[4]

Only a few antiquities of Buddhist pantheon have been recovered from the Begram ruins, which include the base reliefs depicting donators, Siddhārtha and Yaśodharā, his Great Departure, etc. The French Archaeologists have noticed the ruins of four stūpas on each side. Recently a Japanese archaeological team made a survey of the site but they could discover only one stūpa at the southern foot of the eastern hill. They also noticed the remains of a mud-brick construction of a possible monastery building on the hill side. Ruins of some small stūpas (probably votive ones) are also visible nearby, of a later style.[5]

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1. Cf. *East and West* (N.S.), Vol.-XIII, (1962), pp. 317-335; '*The Painted Cups of Begram and Ambrosian*' by Phillippo Coarelli.
2. *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, pp. 89-91; Pande D.B. : *The Shahis of Afghanistan and Punjab*, pp. 52-62.
3. *J.A.S.B.*, Vol. -III (1834), pp. 153-174.
4. Cf. *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-3 (July 1971)-'*Glimpses of Wonder and Beauty in Ivory*' by Mulk Raj Ananda, p.-3; Hakin J.: *The Indian Art and Letters*, Vol.-XII, No.-5, p.-45.
5. Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, Kyoto (1971), p.-126.

Ruins of Shotorak; The Monastic Area

Hiuen-tsiang, as we have referred to earlier, visited this place sometime in 630 A.D. and witnessed a Saṅghārāma built by Kaniṣka for the Chinese hostages. He records, "Kaniska Rājā founded a 'Saṅghārāma' to the east of the capital, 3 or 4 *li* at the foot of a mountain. ..... This is a great Saṅghārāma with the temple of Buddha where treasures in form of Jewels and gems are stored for the repairs of the buildings. There is a stūpa in the temple which was repaired out of this treasure."[1] About a dozen of stūpas have been discovered from Shotorak, some of them quite large. A reliquary of brass with a panel depicting the Mahāparinibbāna scene of the Buddha was recovered from one of the stūpas.[2] Hiuen-tsiang refers to a monastery built by a minister named Rāhula some thirty *li* or so to the south-east of the capital in which a stūpa stood about 100 feet in height, in which the relics of the Buddha were deposited, with the help of the local king.[3] The monastery may be located somewhere near Shotorak, although we do not know the exact site of it. The antiquities recovered from Shotorak include numerous heads of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, the depiction of Bo-tree leaves, figures of Brahmā, Indra on schist, Bodhisattva's head with moustache, figure of Bodhisattva Maitreya, bony figure of Buddha in penance, the scene of Māra and Buddha, Buddha and Tapassu and Bhallika, Jaṭila Kāśyapa and his two brothers with Buddha, scenes from the Dīpaṅkara and Vessantara Jātakas, the Miracle of Srāvāstī, figures of lion and very many other objects.[4] On a schist, we find the depiction of 'bowl worship' which is significant as it displays the tradition of worshipping all the objects used by the Buddha, besides his figure or body-relics. Probably the bowl or *Pātra* used by the Buddha was enshrined at a place near Shotorak, presently called Paitavan, obviously a derivative term from the word *Pattārāma*. The devotees at Shotorak perhaps remained themselves contented only with a stone representation of the same Buddha's bowl. We will discuss about Paitava later. Ruins of a number of monasteries and some six stūpas have also been discovered from the sites excavated there. It leaves no room for doubt that Shotorak was the monastic area of the capital Kapiśa, visited by the Chinese monk-

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1. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk. -II, pp. 55-77, *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-35; Watters T. : *On Yuan-Chwang's Travels*, pp. 124-125.
2. *Shotorak, M.D.A.F.A.*, tome-X, Paris (1942), pp. 49-51, Plate-XXII. 68.
3. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 60-61.
4. *M.D.A.F.A.*, X, Paris (1942), Plates - IX, X, XI, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XXII, XXIV, XXVI, XXVII, XXXI, XXXIV, XXXV, XXXVIII.

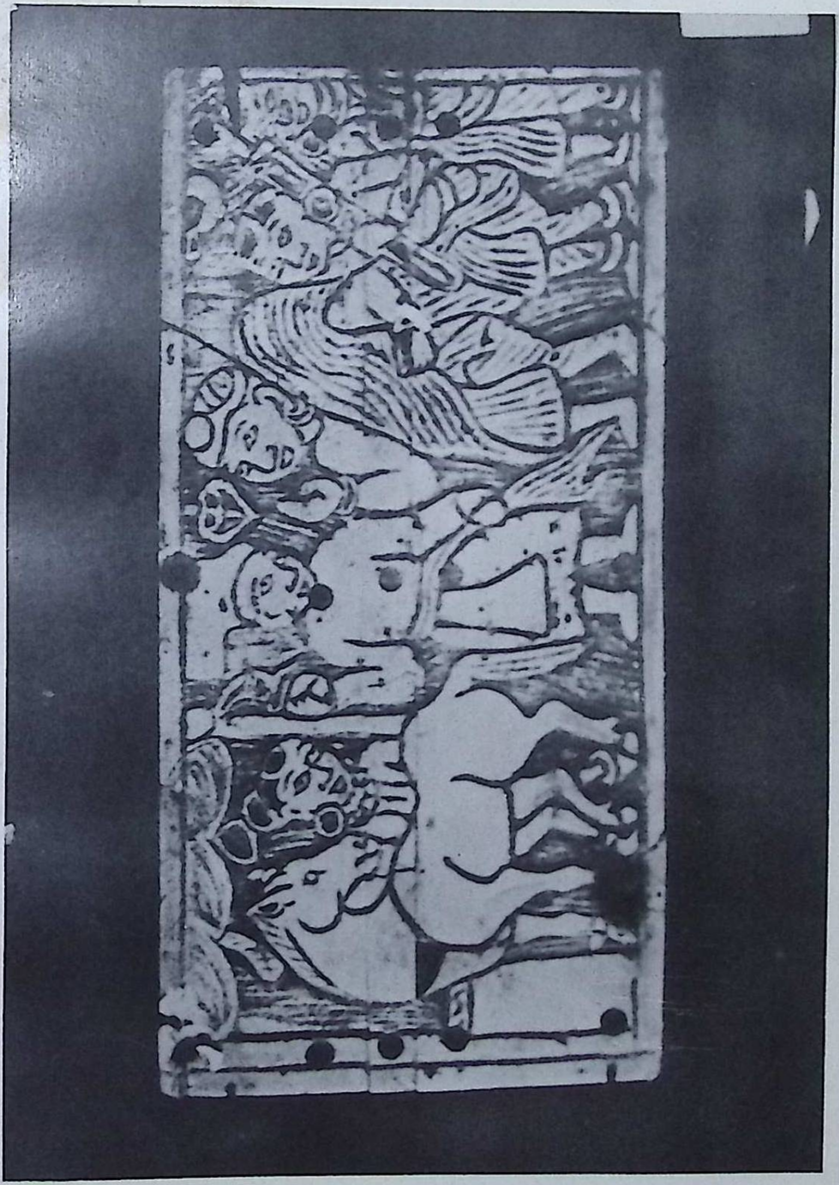

Figure 17 *Begram(Kapiśa):*
Eka'sringa Jātaka (Ivory) 2nd cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

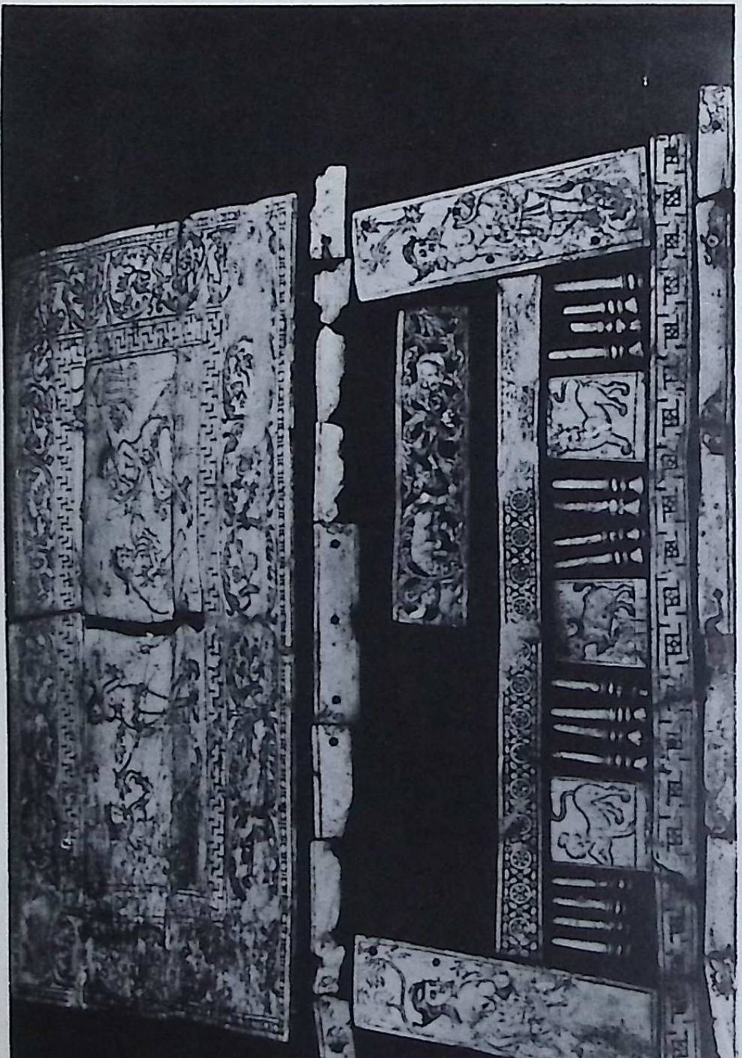

Figure 18 *Begram(Kapiśa)*:
Toilet-box (Ivory) 2nd Cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum)

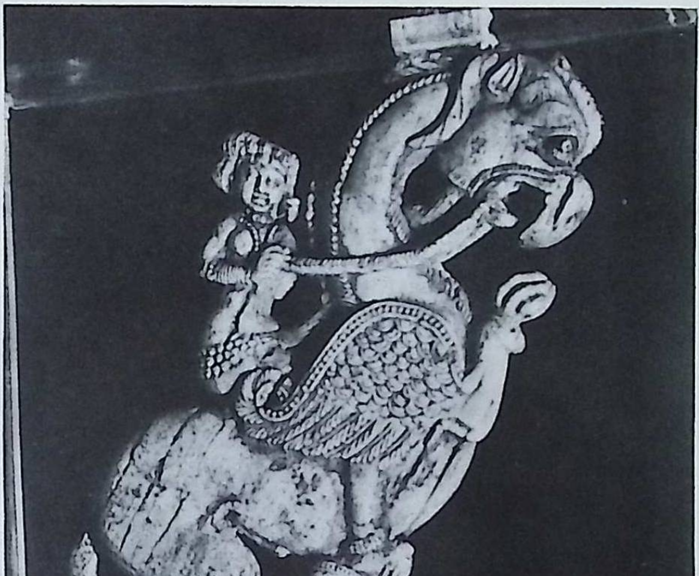

Figure 19 *Begram(Kapiśa):*
Byalaka carved out in a chair-hand (Ivory)
2nd cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum)

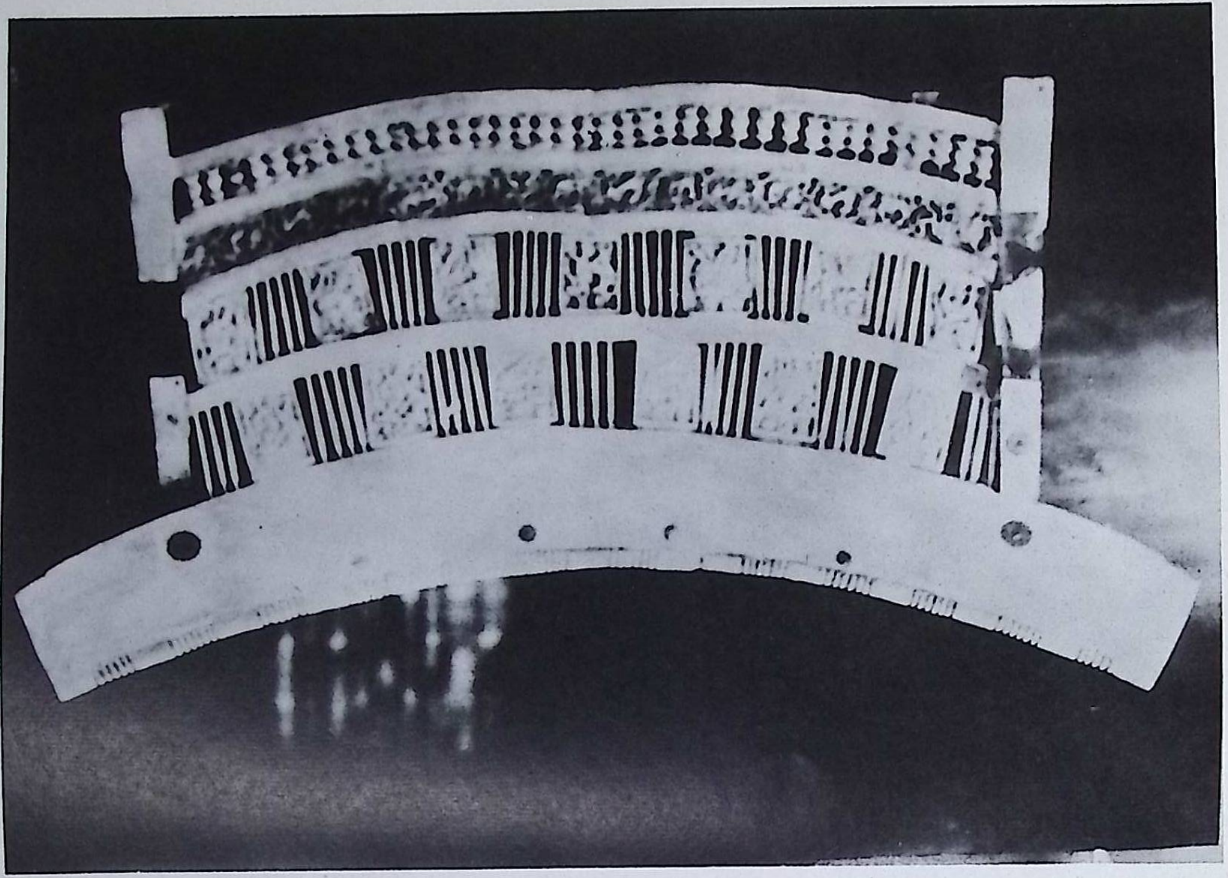

Figure 20 *Begram(Kapiśa):*
Back portion of a throne (Ivory) 2nd cent. A.D.
(Kabul Museum)

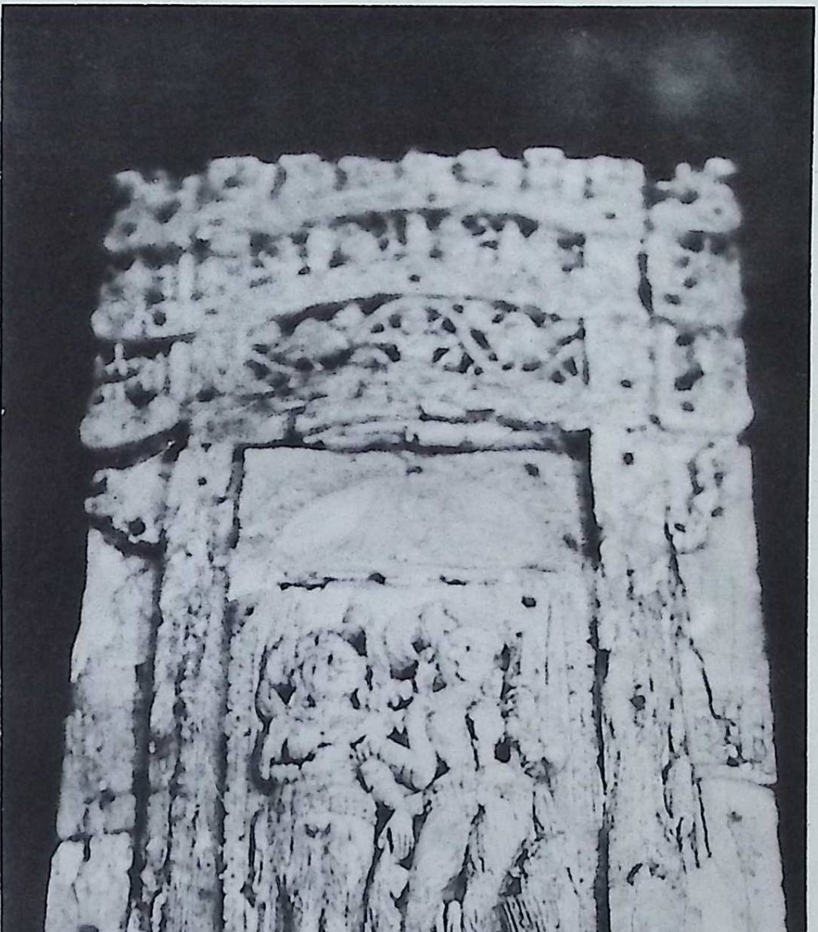

Figure 21 *Begram(Kapiśa):*
Torana (probably from India) (Ivory) 2nd cent. A.D.
(Kabul Museum).

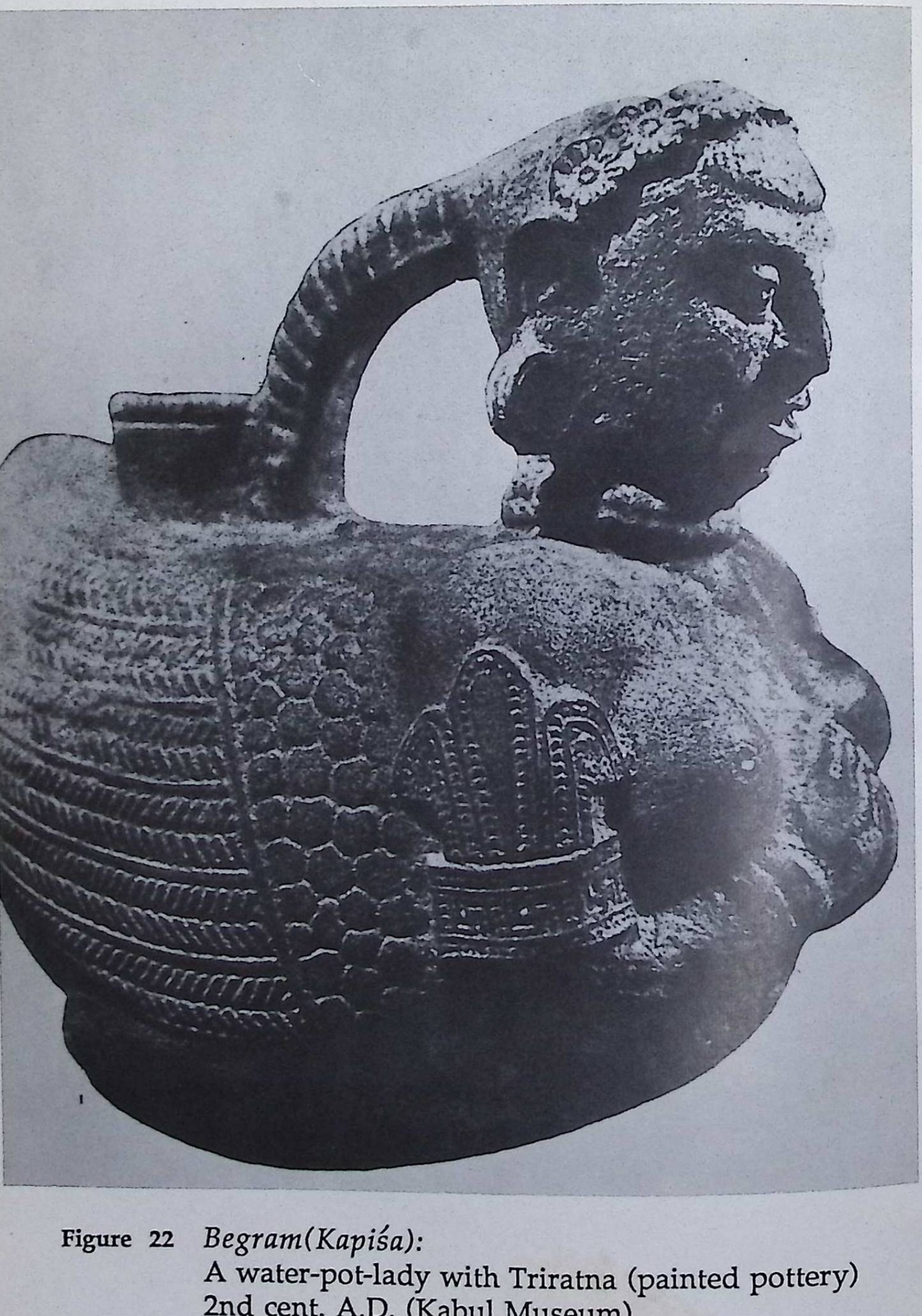

Figure 22 *Begram(Kapiśa):*
A water-pot-lady with Triratna (painted pottery)
2nd cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

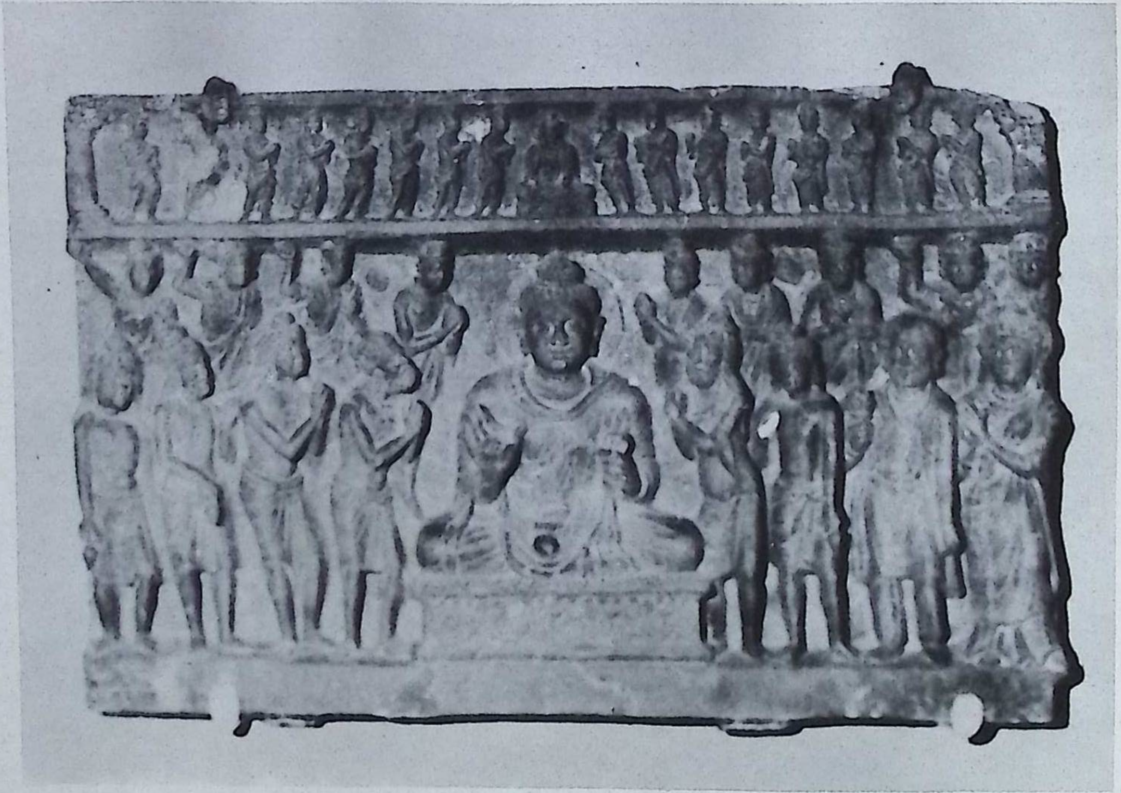

Figure 23 *Begram-Shotorak:*
Jatila Brothers with Buddha (Schist) 2nd-4th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

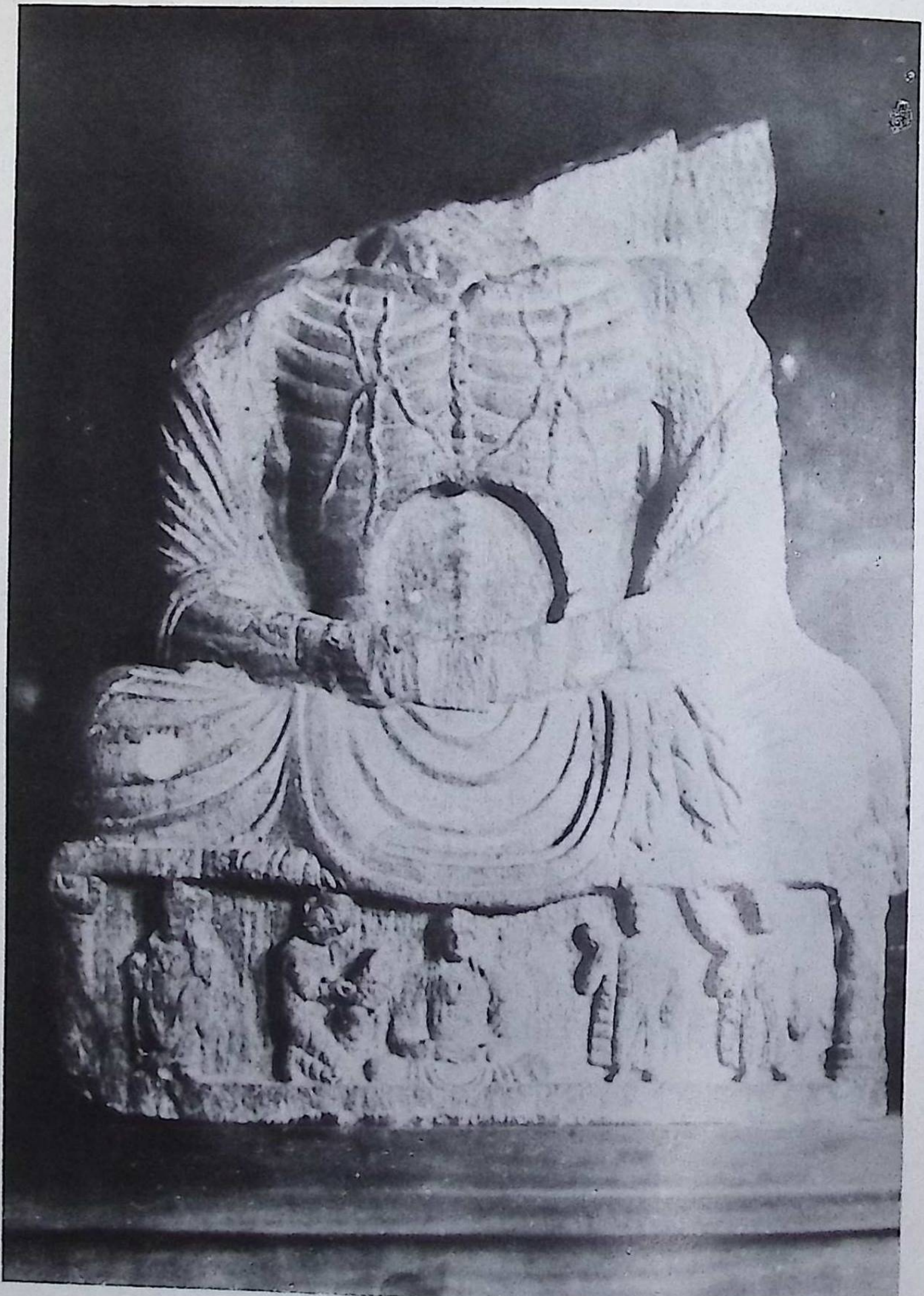

Figure 24 *Begram-Shotorak:*
Buddha in fast (Schist) 2nd-4th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

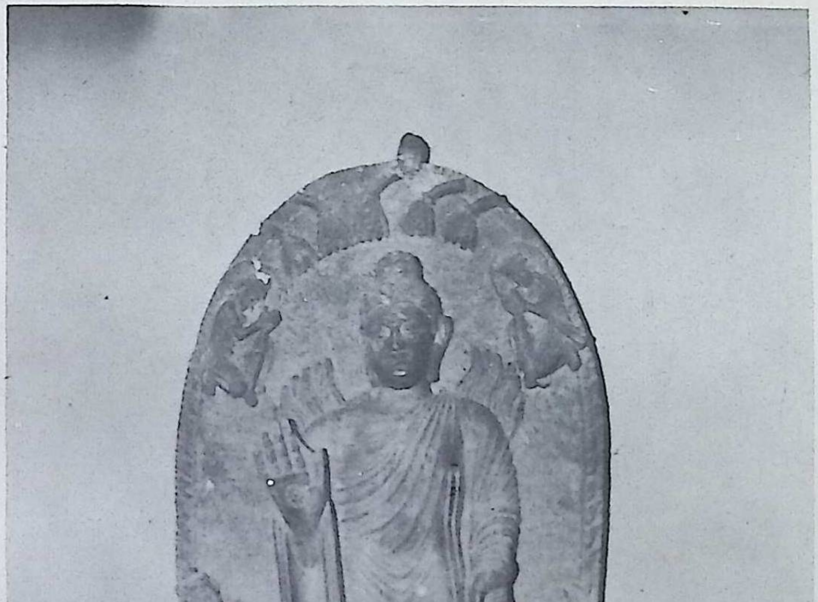

Figure 25 *Begram-Shotorak:*
Dīpaṅkara Jātaka (Buddha trampling over the hair of Brahmana) (Schist) 2nd-4th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum)

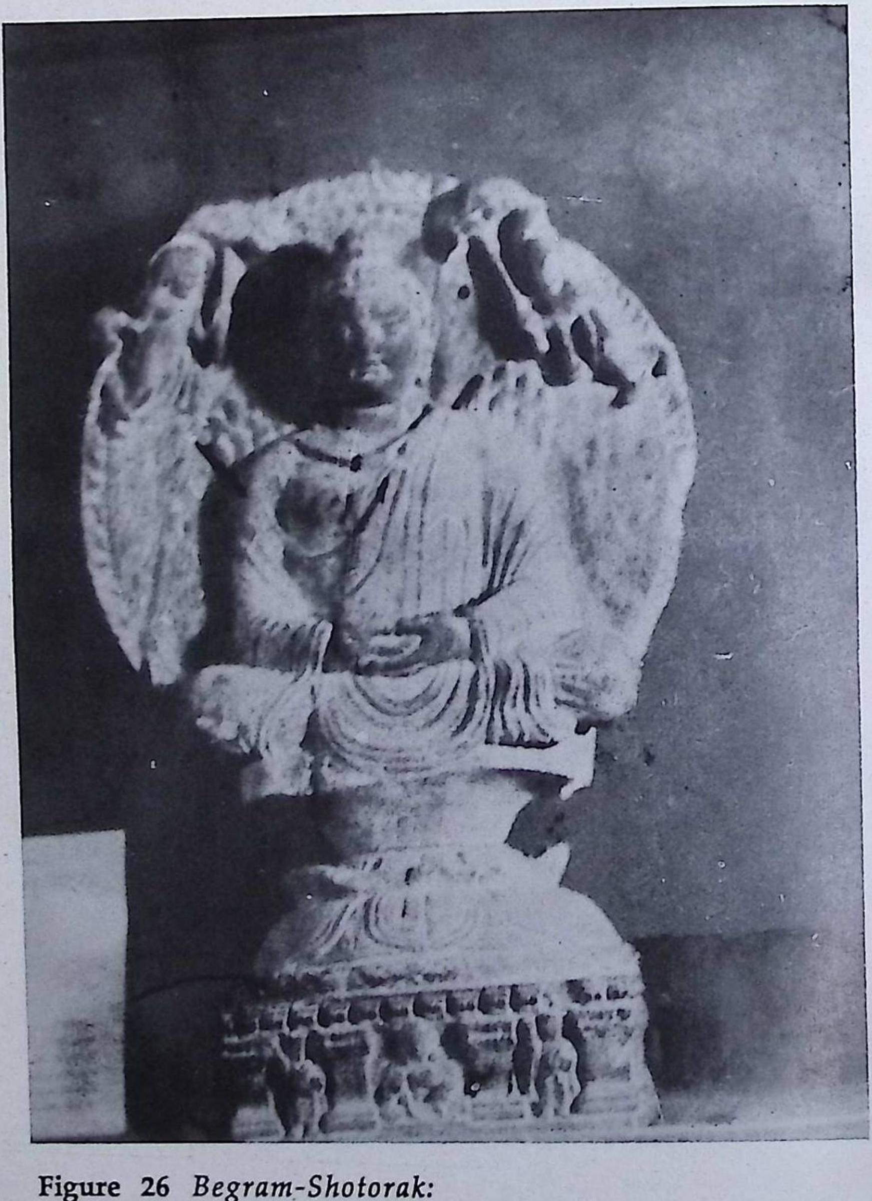

Figure 26 *Begram-Shotorak:*
Buddha seated on lotus (Schist) 2nd-4th cent. A.D.
(Kabul Museum)

scholar and where the temple and a Saṅghārāma were erected by Kaniṣka for the Chinese royal hostages.

Shotorak monastery was probably a centre of 'learning' and 'practice' of Buddhist scriptures, particularly of Abhidharma. Provisions for 'the scriptural knowledge' (*Pariyatti*) and 'practical training' (*Paṭipatti*) of Buddhism were available at this place. Hiuen-tsiang informs that 'above a mountain pass to the north of this convent (of Kapiśa) there are several stone chambers (*Guhā*), it was in these (caves) the (Chinese prince) hostages practised *Samādhi* or meditation'.[1] We do not know for the present where these caves exist, but Beal thinks that the caves were in Charikar, a town near Begram.[2] It does not appear to be possible since Charikar is five to six miles away from Begram and no caves have been discovered from there. In all probability the ancient caves might have been dug near the main monastery area of Kapiśa, that is, near Shotorak. These caves were meant for the 'practical' training in Buddhism. There dwelt many monk-scholars well-versed in scriptures as mentioned by Hiuen-tsiang.

Qala-i-Nader, Tape Kalan and Paitava

Among the rocks which extend east and south-east of Begram, the Koh-i-Pahlvan, or "the mountain of the hero" is surrounded by ancient Buddhist monuments including vihāras, stūpas, shrines, etc. Some of the sites have been excavated from where numerous Buddhist antiquities have been recovered. The places where archaeological excavations have been made are : 1 - Qala-i-Nader, 2-Tapa Kalan and 3- Paitava. We will briefly discuss about them here below.[3]

Qala-i-Nader

It was an ancient monastic establishment. The ruins of a large stūpa and a large monastery have been excavated from here. The monastery is particularly large, consisting of 24 apartments and a courtyard. One of the rooms is of quite a large dimension and was probably used as *Uposathāgara* or meeting-hall and the others were the living cells. Obviously, the monastery being large could accommodate a good number of Buddhist monks who studied and practised Buddhism there. When the stūpa was opened, a bowl of bronze was exhumed which contained some bone relics, probably of some great saint of the place, if not of the Buddha himself. The recovery of the reliquary from the stūpa is significant as it points to the importance of this monastery. The stupa is supposed to have been erected by Kaniṣka since a few of his coins have been found from this place. If it is so, this monastery should have received patronage and support from this great Buddhist emperor who is so well-known for his religious fervour. The niches of the stūpa were once embellished with the figures of the Buddha and other deities. Some heads of the Buddha and of other deities have also been found from there.[1]

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[1] Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 60-61.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.-59, foot-note 208.

[3] For details see : *M.D.A.F.A.*, Tome-VIII, Paris (1959) for Qala-i-Nader, and Tapa Kala, pp. 115-132; tome-X, Paris (1939) for Paitava; also see : *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, Leiden E. J. Brill, 1976, p.-8, 21, fig.-29; *Pictorial Guide to the National Museum of Afghanistan*, 1974, p.-63.

Hidu dhamma in central Asia

Tapa Kalan

Ruins of a large monastery with a number of living cells and numerous antiquities have been found from Tapa-Kalan, a place not very far from Qala-i-Nader. The antiquities recovered from there include Buddha's heads, base reliefs having lion figures and celestial personages, potteries of different kinds, bowls and big jars etc. Coins of Kuṣāṇa king Vāsudeva have been recovered. The antiquities found from this monastery vary from period to period and survive upto the Hephthalites or Hūṇas who actually raided the place in 5th century A.D.[2] It appears that the monastery existed for several centuries and succumbed only to the havoc created by the Hūṇas. It certainly flourished during the Kuṣāṇas and received their patronage and support.

Paitavā

Paitavā or Paitavan was no doubt one of the most important Buddhist monasteries or *Āramas* of Kapiśa. It is conspicuous to note that the present name still retains its ancient term as being a derivative of the word *Pattārāma*, a name given after the *Patta* or *Pātra*, probably enshrined at this place. It may be recalled that numerous place-names ending with *vā* or *vān* for *ārāma* are known to us in India, particularly in Bihar State, for instance, Dhaniyavān for Dhaniyārāma, Ghosaravān for Gohosārāma (both near Nalanda), Tetarāvān for Taitiriyārāma in Gaya, Maṇiyāvān for Maṇiyārāma, a village in Nalanda district and many such others. Paitavā may thus be the transformation of *Pattārāma*, a monastery named after the *Pātra* belonging probably to Buddha or to some great Buddhist saint enshrined there. In this context the account of Hiuen-tsiang is significant.

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[1] *M.D.A.F.A.*, Tome-VIII, J. Meunie, pp. 115-127, figures 260-268.
[2] *M.D.A.F.A.*, Tome-VIII, J. Meunie, pp. 129-132.

He witnessed and worshipped the *Cīvara* (robe) and *Pātra* (bowl) of Arhat Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī (Sanakavāsa) preserved in a monastery near Bamiyan.[1] He also informs that Sanakavāsa or Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī dwelt for some time at Kipin or Kapiśa. It may have been possible that his 'residence' or *Ārāma* in Kapiśa was at Paitavā, and probably after his departure from here to his main centre at Mathura, or even after his death his followers and devotees preserved his *Pātra* at this place. By the passage of time the place came to be known as *Pattārāma* or *Patrārāma*, presently called Paitavā. It also appears possible that in the beginning, the *Pātra* was preserved in this monastery, later somehow or other it was removed to some other monastery near Bamiyan about which Hiuen-tsiang refers to in his travel records. Whatever may be the fact, Paitavā was a monastic establishment of some importance as is evident by the antiquities recovered from there. Besides the ruins of monasteries and stupas several icons, schists depicting different figures of deities and life-scenes of Buddha, figures of different Devas etc. have also been recovered from there. A schist having the figure of a child (of about 2nd century A.D.), the other scene depicting the Miracle of Srāvastī with flames rising behind Buddha's standing figure and under his feet flow of waves of water and on each side small Buddhas symbolising the miraculous multiplication of the Buddha's person are some of the interesting pieces of art. Indra and Brahmā are also depicted holding parasols on the above, and at feet some *Devas* paying homage to the Buddha are shown there.[2] It appears that this great monastery was in a flourishing condition during the Kuṣāṇas and even some centuries after.

Kapiśa after Kuṣāṇas

Kapiśa witnessed its hey-day during the reign of great Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka and his successors, both as a metropolis and also as a great religious centre of Buddhism. After the rule of the Kuṣāṇas the Sassanians, and some time later the Hephthalites or Hūṇas carried devastations in Afghanistan when Kapiśa probably suffered most for being the capital of the country. Kapiśa had to reel under severe hits and blows more than any other town in Afghanistan and had to suffer the utmost loss caused by them. But there is a reason to believe that

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1. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 52-53; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53; Watters T. : *On Yuan-Chwang's Travels*, pp. 120-121.
2. See : Dupree N.H. and Mutamadi A.A. : *Pictorial Guide to National Museum of Afghanistan*, plate-25; *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, E. J. Brill, p.-3 and 21, figure-29.

Buddhism and its monastic centres probably did not suffer so much, at least when the Sassanians raided Kapiśa. Sassanian emperor, Shapur I attacked Kapiśa in about 241 A.D. and destroyed the palace of Kuṣāṇa emperor and the town but probably the monastic areas around the town escaped the fury of the invader obviously because of his only aim to acquire political gain rather than anything else. The monuments and antiquities found from ancient Buddhist places like Shotorak, Paitava, Qala-i-Nader or Tapa Kalan include the objects which belong to later periods showing that these centres of Buddhism continued to flourish for some centuries after. But, of course, the Hephthalites or Hunas caused some damage to some viharas and stupas at Shotorak but not to the extent of extermination of the Religion; and probably after the storm passed off, these centres revived again and began thriving as before.

When Hiuen-tsiang visited Kapiśa in about 631 A.D., he found these centres of religion in a flourishing condition. He records, "The king is a Kṣatriya by caste and reverences much the 'Three Jewels' (*Buddha, Dhamma* and *Saṅgha*). Every year he makes a silver figure of the Buddha, eighteen feet high, and at the same time he invokes on the assembly, called '*Mokṣa Parisad* (i.e. *Prātimokṣa* recitation by the assembly of the monks on the *Pavāraṇā* day, held on the full-moon-day of Kattikà) and distributes alms to the poor."[1] He further informs that the king himself came forward to greet him along with the priests there and brought him escorted. About the monastic centres he says that there are about 10 monasteries and some 6000 monks all over the country and most of them follow the Greater Vehicle. The stūpas are lofty and spacious and built on high level spots from which they may be seen on every side, shining in their grandeur. He specially refers to the monastic establishment at Shotorak (*Sthaviraka*)-*Shir-lo-kia*, located some 3 or 4 *li* to the east of the capital at the foot of the mountain in the north. "There", says he, "is a great Saṅghārāma with some 300 monks and they all belong to the Little Vehicle. This is the place where Kaniṣka also had built a Saṅghārāma and temple for the purposes of the Chinese prince hostages." Hiuen-tsiang preferred to stay there along with other Chinese monk, Hwiu-sing or Prajñākara who himself belonged to the Hīnayāna school.[2] In the *Life of Hiuen-tsiang* it is recorded that "there was a great treasure in this vihāra kept under the foot of the image of the 'Great-Spirit King' i.e.

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1. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 54-55; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-54; Watters T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p.-123.
2. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-54.

Vaiśravana, near the image of the Buddha, by the Chinese Prince hostages for the purpose of repairs. An inscription to this effect is also there."[1] When Hiuen-tsiang was staying there money was needed for the purpose of repairs of the parambulatory path (*Pradakṣiṇāpatha*) of the stūpa and then money was taken from that. Hiuen-tsiang probably inspected the repair works by himself and 'spent exactly what wás wanted for the purpose'. He is said to have spent his *Vassāvāsa* (Rainy-Season-Resort) at this vihāra.[2] During his stay there, at the instance of the king of the country, a great assembly of monk-scholars was convened for philosophical discussions with Hiuen-tsiang and his companion Prajñākara. He refers to three eminent monk-scholars of utmost erudition and extreme intelligence. One of them was Manojñaghoṣa by name who was a great master of all the Three Piṭakas and the other was Āryavarma, well-versed in the Sarvastivada school and the third monk-scholar of eminence was Guṇabhadra who was an erudite scholar of Mahimsāsaka school of Buddhism.[3] It is remarkable to note that all these monk-scholars were profound in different branches of Theravāda Buddhism who resided at this main monastery of Kapiśa, at Shotorak (Sthaviraka-vihāra) where the discussions with Hiuen-tsiang lasted for five days. It is said that Hiuen-tsiang established his superiority by answering all the questions put to him by 'all corners' and placed his superiority in knowledge over all.[4] It is evident from the account of Hiuen-tsiang that Shotorak at Kapisa was a great centre of learning of different branches of Buddhism, particularly Later Theravāda studies and practice during 7th century A.D.

Other Monasteries of Kapiśa

We have referred to earlier a cave-monastic-centre located some 2 or 3 *li* to the west of the capital as recorded in the accounts of Hiuen-tsiang. Some of these caves were built during the reign of Kaniṣka particularly for the Chinese Prince hostages for meditational purposes.

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1. *Ibid.*, p.-54.
2. *Ibid.*, p.-55; Cf. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-I, p.-50; Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p.-125.
3. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-56. The Mahimṣāsakas are said to have separated from the Early Theravāda School soon after the 2nd Buddhist Council. It was again divided into Sabbatthīvāda (Sarvāstivāda) and the Dhammaguttika schools. Mahimsāsakas also came to Afghanistan, probably sometime later than the Mahāsaṅghikas who had already settled in Uḍyāna. For views of these schools see: N. Dutta- *Buddhist Sects in India*, pp. 130-134 and for early references in Pali see : *Mahāvamsa*, V.-6; *Dīpavaṃsa*, V.-45; 47; *Mahāvaṃsaṭīka* (Nalanda), p.-139.
4. Beal, S.: *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp. 56-57

Hiuen-tsiang informs that there stood a statue of Avalokiteśvara *(Kwan-tsz-tsai)* Bodhisattva.[1] Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is adored in the Mahayana pantheon and is purely a metaphysical creation of this school.[2] Hiuen-tsiang propitiated this image. He eulogogises it in these words, "This Bodhisattva appears in person before one who with sincere faith desires so."[3] Evidently by the time of Hiuen-tsiang, in 7th century A.D.. Mahāyāna Buddhism has spread at several places in Afghanistan and many gods and goddesses have since been added to Buddhist pantheon and their worship has become popular among the people. This cave-monastic-centre near Kapiśa was following the Mahāyāna school whicḫ naturally attracted Hiuen-tsiang to pay a visit to this place as he himself followed this school.

Yet another monastery that Hiuen-tsiang visited near Kapiśa was 'Rāhula Saṅghārāma', so called because a minister, Rāhula by name of a former king, had constructed it. This monastery was located some 30 *li* to the south-east of the capital. A magnificient stūpa about 100 feet high stood there which contained the relics of the Buddha.[4] This place has yet to be identified and we believe if his itinerary be followed, it should be located somewhere near Paitavā. Hiuen-tsiang paid his homage to this stūpa and then returned to the capital. It appears that the relics of the Buddha were originally obtained by the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka from the king of Magadha. A story is narrated in the Chinese version of the *Sampradāya Nidāna* in which it is said that the monarch of Pāṭaliputra was defeated by Yueh-Chi and was obliged to purchase peace at the price of 900,000 pieces of gold. He was unable to pay this heavy ransom and in liue of that he surrendered to his conqueror a priceless relic, the begging bowl of the Buddha, a marvellous cock which would not drink water containing insects and the learned Aśvaghosa.[5] Obviously this Yueh-Chi conqueror was none other than Kaniṣka as we know that Aśvaghosa lived during the time of Kaniṣka. Kaniṣka enshrined this relic of the Buddha in a stūpa erected in one of the viharas of Kapiśa.[6] It may be at Shotorak or any other place; or probably the Buddha's bowl *(Pātra)* was preserved in monastery at Paitavā about which we have already discussed above.

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1. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. -60; Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p.-126.
2. See Malalseker, G.P. : *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, (1966), pp. 407-415.
3. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 60-61.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
5. See Rosenfield, J.M. : *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (1971), p.-32.
6. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, pp. XXXII-XXXIII.

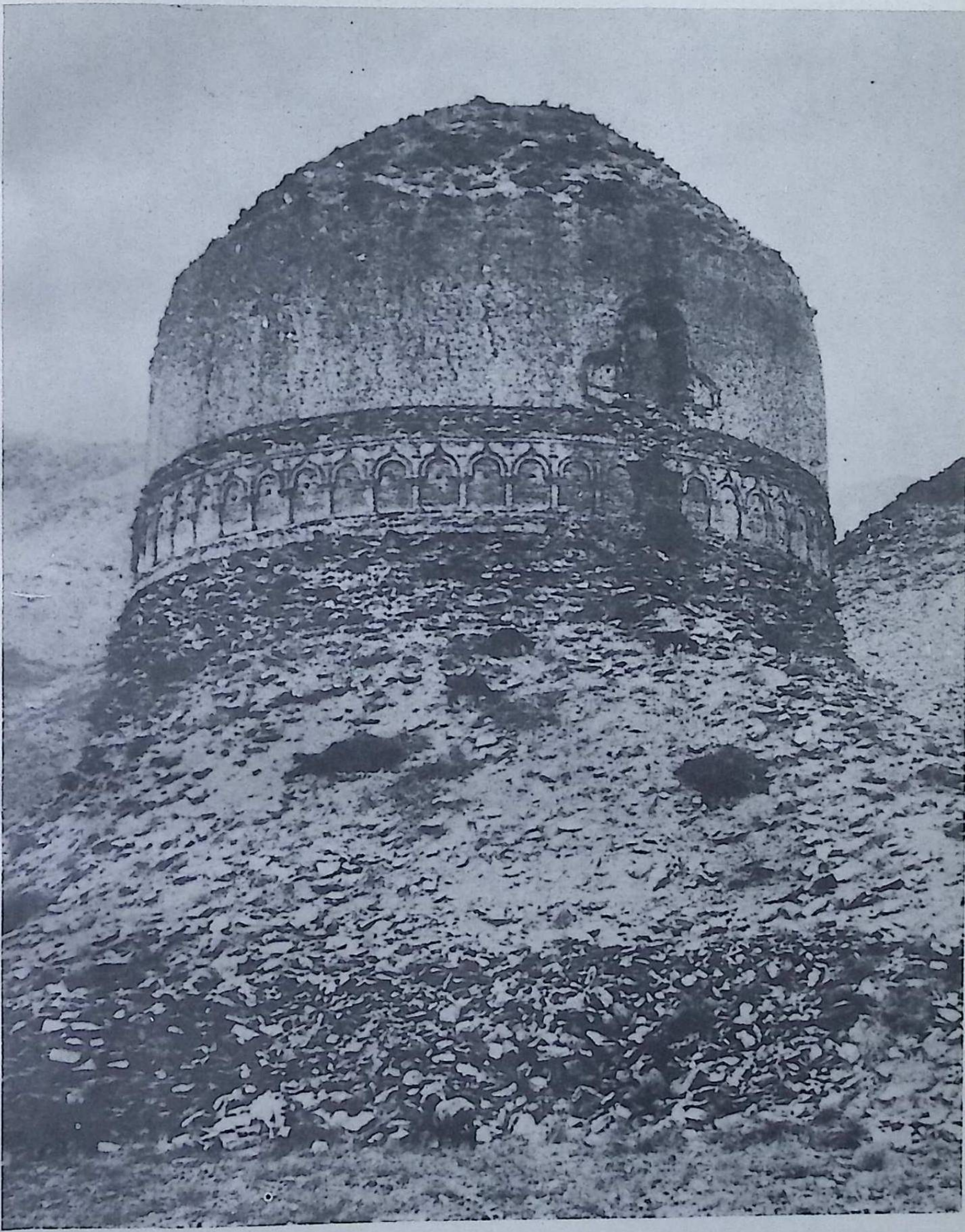

Figure 27: Tope Darrah (Charikar) (Stone built) 2nd cent. A.D.

Kapiśa no doubt obtained a piece of the corporeal relics of the Buddha during Kaniṣka period, about which we unfortu-nately know nothing.

Charikar, Gul-Bahar and Nur

Buddhism continued to thrive in and around Kapiśa for several centuries as we find a number of Buddhist monuments in this area, some explored and excavated while others remain unattended. Chrikar is the head-quarters of this area at present, located a few miles away from the ancient site of Begram or Kapiśa. Near Charikar, ruins of some monasteries have been noticed. A big monastery was excavated sometime back by the Japanese Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan under the leadership of Prof. T. Higuchi. A number of antiquities have been recovered from there. Some 5kms. from Charikar to the east stands a large stūpa, perhaps the largest and most preserved, at a place called by the people 'Tope-Darrah' or 'Burj-i-Kafir'. The stūpa stands between two ranges of a hill and hence called 'Tope-Darrah' and the village located there is also known by the same name. The pedestal of the stūpa has however collapsed but the drum with niches in trilobed arches is still preserved. The stupa measures 20 mtr. high and 30 mtr. across. Some think that it was erected by Kaniṣka and may be placed in about 1st century A.D.[1] Probably there was a monastery nearby but it is no more. Charles Masson was the first to discover this stūpa in 1833 A.D. He opened the relic chamber of the stūpa but found nothing except some bone fragments.[2]

In Charikar area, there appears to have existed some Buddhist centres including those at Begram. The name of the town as Charikar *(Cārikāra)* appears to be the reminiscent of the word *Cārikā*, a term particularly used for 'wandering' of the Buddhist monks for seeking alms or for journey.[3] May it be that the monks dwelling near the town or even at Begram (Kapiśa) used to visit this place for their usual meals or for their other subsistences as it lay within the 'limit' (*sīma*) of their *'Carikā'* and hence called 'Cārikāra'. But it is a simple guess and it may also be the transformation of some other term, for instance, may it be a derivative of *Catuāryavihāra*, the 'great four Vihāras' established around it?

Not very far from Begram on the north bank of the Panjshir river a Buddhist site has been located in a village called 'Gul-Bahar'. While digging there for the construction of a spinning mill many stone sculptures were recovered indicating it a Buddhist place. Probably there existed a temple and a monastery.[1] About 6kms. from Gul-Bahar is the valley of Nur behind which another monastic site has been noticed. The big mound there is the debris of a stūpa and a monastery. On the surface, a pair of stone lions for the throne is still *in situ* in the middle of the site.[2]

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[1] Mizuno S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul*, (Kyoto) (1971), pp. 126-127.
[2] *J.A.S.B.*, 1934, p.-1 ff.
[3] Cf. for *Cārikā* , see : *Pali English Dictionary*, Rhy Davids & Stede, p.-265.

These Buddhist sites were flourishing when Hiuen-tsiang visited Kapiśa during 7th century A.D. where monks belonging to different Schools of Buddhism were dwelling. Hiuen-tsiang met with many monk-scholars and had held philosophical discussions with them that we have seen earlier. By this time the Mahāyāna school had started growing as some of the monasteries were exclusively belonged to this school, where worship of different gods and goddesses and Bodhisattvas, Nāgas and spirits was in practice. The figure of 'Great Spirit King' as Hiuen-tsiang records, was enshrined to the south of the eastern door of the hall of Buddha in the monastery of Kaniṣka that he had built for the Chinese Prince hostages. The Yakṣas are said to have guarded the treasure kept there for the repairs of the vihāra,[3] about which we have discussed earlier. We have also seen that in the Mahāyāna viharas, the worship of Avalokiteśvara was also prevalent.[4] The Hīnayāna school of Buddhism, particularly Later Theravada was also flourishing in some monasteries during this period. Hiuen-tsiang himself stayed in one of these monasteries at Kapiśa. It appears that the Mahāyāna Buddhism was in ascendancy and many monasteries were the centres of this school and probably a good section of the society also followed then.

Other Religionists in Kapiśa

Hiuen-tsiang informs us that he had seen a number of centres belonging to different religionists, holding different faiths and wearing queer dresses and objects. Besides Buddhist temples and monasteries he noticed there some ten temples of 'Deva' (Mahādeva or Śiva) where 1000 heretics dwelt. He saw some of them naked (Jaina Digambara ascetics?) and some covered themselves with ashes and some wore chaplets of bones crowning over their heads.[5] It appears, these ascetics

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1. Mizuno, S. : *Baswal and Jalalabad-Kabul,* (Kyoto) (1971), p.-126.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.
3. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 58-59, 63-67; Watters T. : *On the Yuan Chwang's Travels*, pp. 55-56.
4. Beal, S. : *Ibid.*, p.-60.
5. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-55; Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, p.-123.

migrated from India probably during the reign of Kaniṣka who ruled over a vast area of India, Central Asia and China; and also Afghanistan. Although he professed Buddhism, he had sympathy and regard to other religionists as well which is evident from his coins, which not only bear the figure of Buddha or Śākyamuni Buddha (with legend BODDO in Greek) but also of the deities belonging to Hellanistic, Iranian and Indian pantheons. Kapiśa being one of the capitals of his empire in the west these religionists also possibly established their centres there. But Buddhism was in predominance and many monasteries were the great centres of Buddhist learning and practice where great monk-scholars dwelt who belonged to both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools.

Kapiśa After Hiuen-tsiang

Sung-yun is another Chinese monk traveller after Hiuen-tsiang, who presents an account of earlier devastating operations of North-western part of Indian sub-continent by the Hūṇas. He tells that 'two generations before his time the Hūṇas or Hepthalites had overrun Gandhāra and adjoining areas. Some monasteries at Taxila were put to flame'. This catastrophe should have occurred sometime by the close of 5th century A.D. Notwithstanding their havoc by military operations, the Buddhist centres continued to flourish as before. Modern researches show that during these operations although some Buddhist centres suffered some damage, but by and large, Buddhism was never persecuted by the Hepthalites in Central Asia or elsewhere, rather some rulers gave support to Buddhism as is evident from the inscriptions on some Hepthalites coins which are connected with Buddhism.[1] When Hiuen-tsiang visited Kapiśa, Buddhism was in a flourishing condition that we have seen earlier. Scholars are of the opinion that the Turki Shahis ruled over Kapiśa and the area south of the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan from about the middle of 5th century A.D. onward and the 'Kṣatriya' king of Kapiśa, as mentioned by Hiuen-tsiang, was none other than a descendant of Ratbil, the founder of the dynasty.[2] These Turki Shahis supposed to be the predecessors of the Hindu Shahis of Kabul of later centuries who ruled over Kapiśa for several centuries. The Turks who raided Afghanistan earlier, were no doubt Buddhists;[1] and as such Buddhism did not receive much adverse effect by their raids. A Chinese monk, Śramaṇa Hiuen-chin (or Prakāśamati) met with I-tsing at Nalanda in 664 A.D. who informed him that the roads through Kapiśa were blocked in the hands of Arabs.[2] But another Chinese traveller Ou-k'ong of rather later period, between 759-763, saw many temples in the Buddhist sanctuaries erected by the Turki rulers or members of their families in Gandhāra and Kaśmīra. In Gandhāra, according to this Chinese traveller, there was a temple of *Tegin-cha* (or-*Te-kin-li*), who is identified with *On-sen-tegin-cha* of the Chinese records, who ruled Kapisa in 739.[3] These Turki Shahis were Buddhists and built temples and vihāras. Ou-k'ong witnessed yet another temple of Buddha in Gandhāra which was founded by the Khartun, "the wife of the king of the Turks". The Kapiśa king being Buddhist is said to have friendly diplomatic relations with China from where embassies were received and sent. It was by this time (720 A.D.) when the king of Kapiśa was awarded the high title of *'Tiging'* by the Chinese emperor. No less than six embassies were sent from Kapiśa to China between 619-750 A.D.[4] It is very likely that close diplomatic relations between Kapiśa and China further strengthened the cultural contacts between these two countries through their monk-scholars.

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[1] Cf. *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, Outline History of Buddhism in Central Asia, by B.A. Litivinsky, pp. 88-89; Cf. Biswas, Atreyi, *Political History of the Hūṇas in India*, pp. 108-109.

[2] Ray, H.C. : *The Dynastic History of N. India*, Vol. -I (1979), p.-71; Sircar, D.C. : *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, p.-235; Pande, D.B. : *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab* (1973), p.-60; Mishra, Y. : *The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab*, (1972), p.-5.

Fall of Kapiśa

As a matter of fact the fall of Kapiśa began with the incessant attacks of the Arabs. The first attempt on Kapiśa and Kabul was made in about 650 A.D., which was however repulsed back, as recorded by the Arab Annals. Notwithstanding the vigorous resistance posed by the Shahis of Kabul, the Arabs advanced step by step till Kabul fell in 870 A.D.[5] The Shahis had to transfer their capital from Kapiśa to Kabul following the capture of the former by Ibrahim-bin-Jabbal, the Governor of Zabulistan who sacked it in 793 during the reign of Caliph Harun Rashid (783-809).[6] The repeated attacks of the Arabs became

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1. *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, 'Outline History of Buddhism in Central Asia', by B.A. Litivinsky, p.-89.
2. Beal S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, Introduction, pp. XXVIII-XXIX.
3. *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, Outline History of Buddhism in Central Asia by B.A. Litivinsky, pp. 89-90; also Cf. *Translation of Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Vol.-I by M.A. Stein, (1961) Introduction p.-92.
4. Cf. : *The Classical Age*, Edt. R.C. Majumdar and others, Bombay (1962), pp. 622-623.
5. Cf. Ray, H.C. : *Dynastic History of N. India*, Pt. -I, p.-70.
6. Cf. A.A. Kehzad : *Tarikh-i-Afghanistan*, Vol.-II, Kabul (1946), p.-551, also see Pande, D.B. : *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab* (1972), pp. 32, 72, 121.

irresistible and as a result the capital yet again had to be transferred from Kabul to Udbhāṇḍapura (Ohind) by the Hindu Shahis. Finally, the Hindu Shahis rule became extinct by the defeat of Trilocana Pāla at the hands of Mohammed Ghor in 1015.[1]

Arabs' attack proved fatal to Kapiśa as it suffered brutally, both politically and culturally. According to the statements of later Muslim Chroniclers these attacks were made with the object to bringing Islam to those quarters where it had not yet reached.[2] In the event of such perilous conditions the Buddhist public and monks were left to no option but to embrace Islam or to court sword. As a result the Buddhist monasteries being located near the town of conspicuous built lured to be the brutal targets of these fanatic invaders. Large buildings of the viharas and temples were razed to the ground and the inhabitant monks were butchered for being easily recognizable on account of their saffron dress and shaven heads and also easily discernible as the religious leaders of the society. The result was eminent. They were indiscriminately massacred, some only could flee while others embraced Islam. The Buddhist Ārāmas and vihāras were thoroughly pillaged, images were totally mutilated by breaking their heads and hands and invariably cutting their noses.[3] Most of the Buddhist monasteries which were the educational centres with libraries containing innumerable manuscripts of the Buddhist scriptures, were burnt to ashes. Thus, there came an end to these monastic-cum-educational centres which once upheld and nourished the culture, religion and learning of the nation for centuries. The total massacre of the Buddhist monks coupled with mass conversion to Islam brought a stand-still of Buddhist religion and culture there. The version found in the *Mahāvagga,* an early Pali text, that the *'Vinaya'* (or monastic order) is the 'age' of the *'Dhamma' (Vinayo nāma dhammassa āyu)* [4] is significantly illustrated in this context. Buddhism could never be revived again as no monk was left to uphold the banner of *Saddharma.* Kapiśa lost its pristine glory and glamour and finally sank deep in oblivion for the good.

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1. Pande, D.B. : *Ibid.,* p.-113; Mishra, Y. : *The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and Punjab* (1972), p.-188.
2. Cf. Pande, D.B., *Op. cit.,* p.-114.
3. The destruction of Nalanda monastery and conflagration of its world famous libraries are recorded by a contemporary historian Shamse Shiraj in his work the *Tavarekh-e-Nasiri.* Defacement of an idol by cutting nose or mutilating hands and heads is common throughout in India. Also Cf. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini,* VII. 63, 66, 70.
4. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda), p. 48.

6

BAMIYAN

Cave Monasteries of Lokuttaravādins

Afghanistan is replete with innumerable Buddhist monuments in the form of stūpas, caves, monasteries, temples; but no other site can be more magnificent than Bamiyan, both in extent and in excellence. The two colossal images of Buddha stand here hewn out of a rock; one being the largest in the world. So also, the largest number of Buddhist caves, numbering some twenty thousand, have been dug in the hill there and around. The paintings on the walls and the 'lantern roof' and other embellishments in the caves there superb in the country. Because of its singular historical and cultural importance, there is hardly any visitor coming to Afghanistan to miss this great Buddhist site.

Bamiyan valley is situated about 120 Kms. north-west of Kabul at an elevation of 8,500 ft., lying between the Hindu Kush and Koh-i-Baba mountains.[1] In order to reach Bactria and Sogdiana it was necessary to cross the Hindu Kush via Bamiyan. As a matter of fact it is situated on the ancient route followed by traders, wanderers, invaders who travelled from the west or from the east. Eventually the streams of different cultures, such as Graeco-Bactrian, Achaeminide or Iranian and other nomadic cultures seem to have met and mingled and in due course transformed into the Indo-Buddhist Culture, which remained there for several centuries.

Meaning of Bamiyan

Hiuen-tsiang, the famous Chinese monk-traveller visited this place sometime in 630 A.D. and calls it *Fan-Yen-na*.[2] Another Korean

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[1] *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p.-534.

[2] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-52.

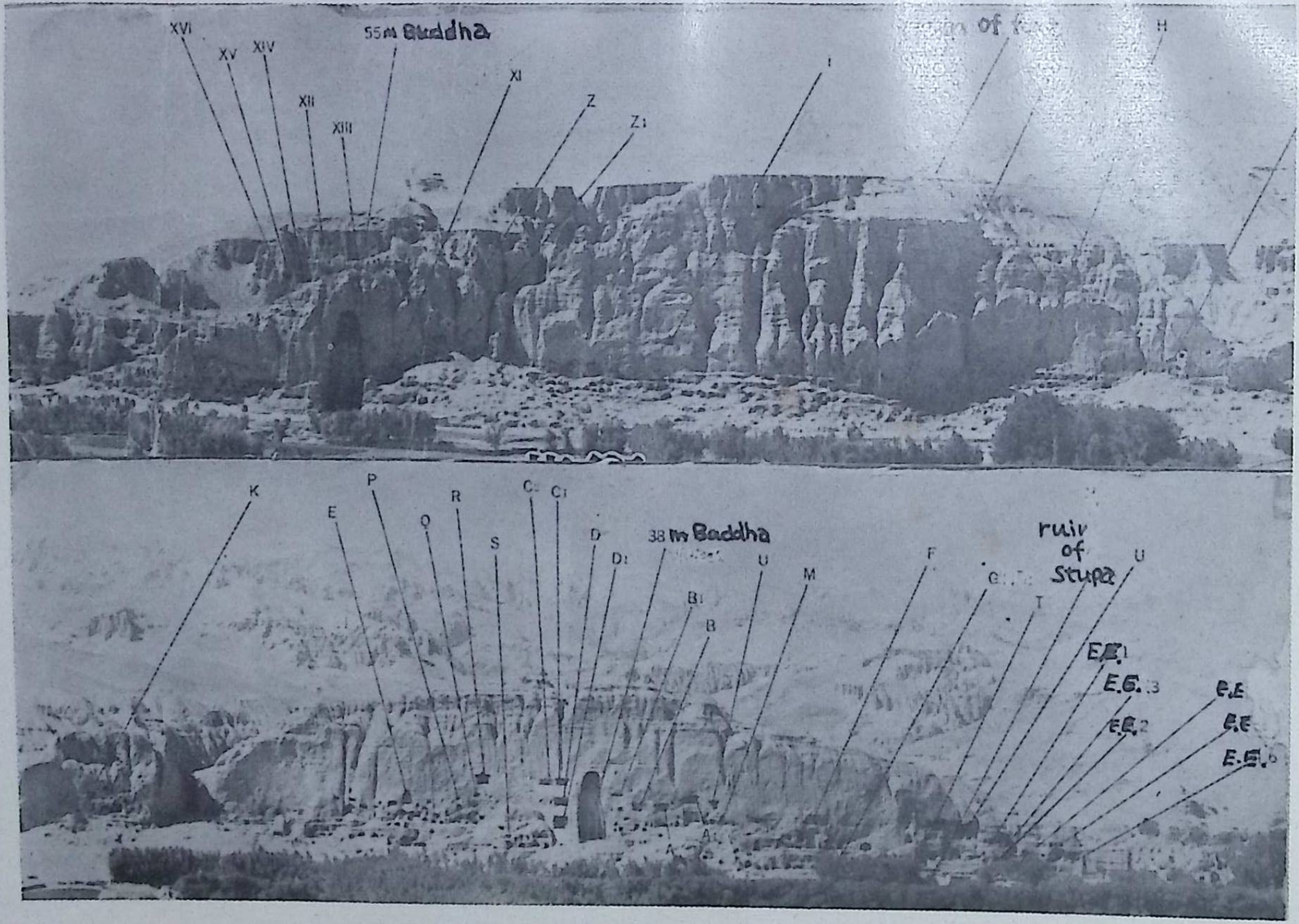
XVI
XV
XIV
XII
XIII
55m Buddha
XI
Z
Z1
I
H
K
E
P
Q
R
S
C
C1
D
D1
38 m Buddha
U
B1
B
M
F
ruin of Stupa
T
U
E.E.1
E.E.3
E.E.2
E.E
E.E
E.E.6

Figure 28 General View of Bamiyan.

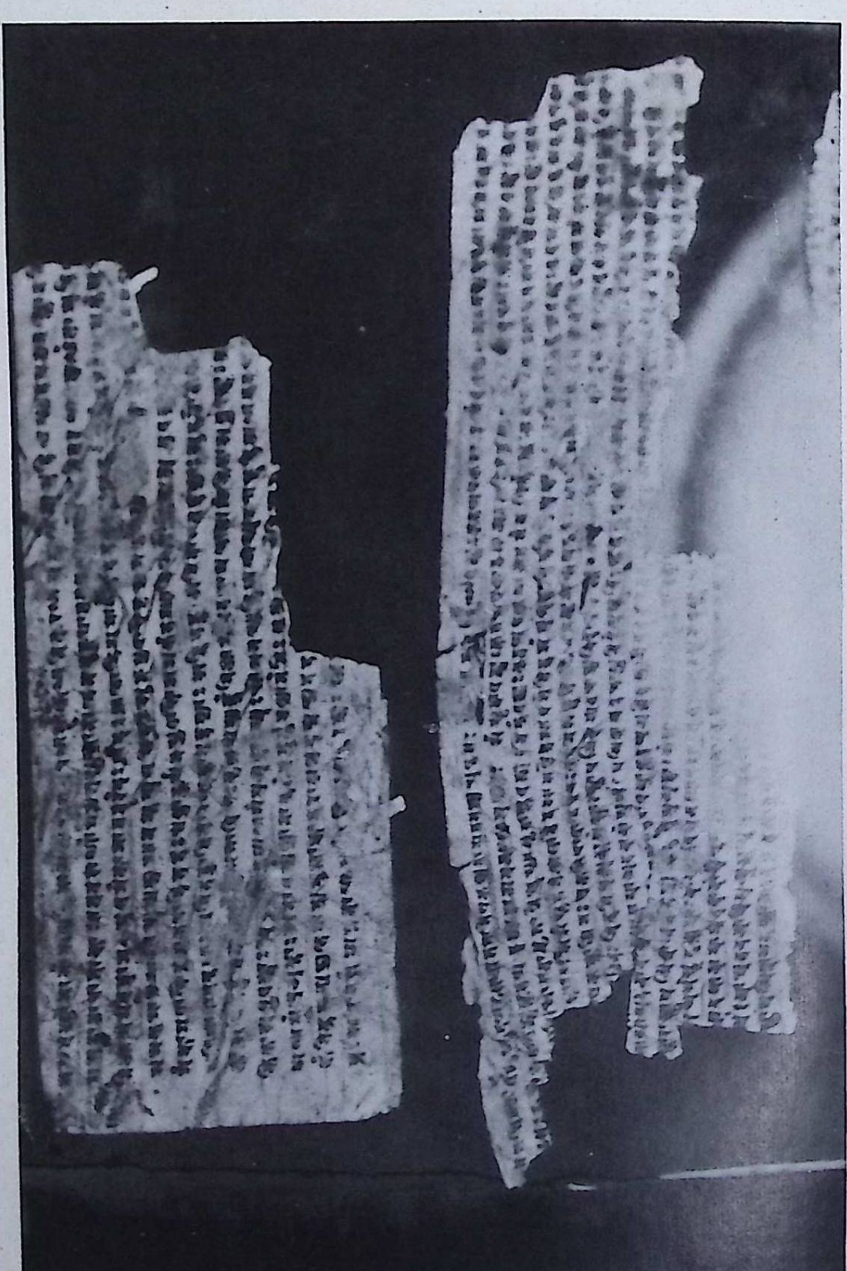

Figure 29 *Bamiyan:*
A manuscript in Brahmi (6th cent. A.D.) recovered from a cave of Bamiyan (Kabul Museum).

monk, Hui-cha'o came to Bamiyan later and stayed there for some time. He calls it *Fan-Yin.*[1] Charles Masson who explored many ancient sites of Afghanistan in the late 19th Century paid several visits to this place. He mentions that Bamiyan means 'Roof of Universe'; for *Bam* means 'roof'.[2] According to another interpretation, the term Bamiyan is probably formed of two words, *Bam* + *Main*, meaning 'between the cliffs or terraces', as *Bam* indicates cliff and *main* is *seath.*[3] Bamiyan may have derived its present name from '*Butyan*'. The term *but* in New Persian is used in the sense of 'idol', although originally meaning 'Buddha'. This meaning is still extant in many passages of New Persian. The word for 'Bodhisattva' appears in Pahlavi as *'But'sp'*; and *'Budasaf'* in Arabic.[4] Thus, *'Bam'* may stand for 'Buddha' and *'Mian'* for the place where stand the two colossi. 'Buddhamian' or 'Butmian' appears to be the original name of the place meaning the 'place between the cliffs where two images of the Buddha' stand at both ends of Koh-i-Baba hill. But it is of course difficult to discern the exact meaning of the place as no record is available.

Rock-Cut Caves

Bamiyan has become world famous because of the two colossal idols of the Buddha hewn out of the rock in the niches. One of them measures 55 meters in height,[5] and the other is 35 meters. Both stand in the conglomerate facing to the south. For many, Bamiyan has become 'synonymous with Afghanistan' on account of these two colossi.[6] The honey-combed caves number several thousands, some with typical 'lantern designed' dome ceilings and other embellishments. We also find four large seated Buddhas in niches besides many other kinds of ornamentations in varied designs. They all are marvellous indeed to create a sense of awe and admiration to one who visits the place even today.

These rock-cut caves, which look like the honey-comb from a distance, are dug in the cliff. They stretch over a mile in extent and number about 20,000, although they have never been accurately

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1. Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p. -58.
2. *JASB*, Vol.-5 (1836), p.-707.
3. *Historical and Political Gazettetr of Afghanistan*, Edition by Ludwig W. Adamec, Glossary.
4. *BSOAS*, Vol.-VI (1930-32), A.W. Bailey, pp. 279-283.
5. When the feet of the Big Buddha were exposed to the original level, the image has become 55 meters in height instead of 53 mtr. known hitherto. Cf. *Indian Archaeology*, A Review, p.-118.
6. Cf. Allchin, F & Hammond, N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.37.

counted.[1] They are cut in several sizes and designs; some are so large as to accommodate hundreds of people for sitting and some so small in which only one or two monks can live. The vast number of caves and also the huge images and other decorations there all show its grandeur and importance. Bamiyan was perhaps the largest Buddhist centre in Afghanistan; perhaps the largest in the group of rock-cut Buddhist caves in the world.[2]

History

It is extremely difficult to know as to when and by whose pious efforts Bamiyan grew to such an excellent and large monastic centre of Buddhists. The ancient history of Bamiyan is obscure. Neither the Buddhist texts nor any other archaeological finds or sources throw any light on its early history. Only the occasional accounts left to us by the Chinese and Korean monk-travellers, who visited this place relate its grandeur that it had in the past. The antiquities discovered from there are definitive source to help us in this regard to some extent. They are only remotely helpful to reconstruct its history.

Scholars believe that since Bamiyan lay on the 'silk route' that passed via Balkh to Bamiyan onward to Kapisa and Kabul and then on to India proper in the east, it served as a great 'carvansarai' where traders, travellers and Buddhist pilgrims all alike stayed for a short period from ancient times. It was never thickly populated and remained only as a 'resting place'.[3] It appears true; and further, it may be pointed out that probably those Buddhist monks who travelled with the touring merchants (*Satthavāha*) also stayed there to spend a short period of three or four months for the observance of the 'Rainy Season Resort' (*Vassāvāsa*) as according to their ecclesiastical obligation. They found this place as best suited for meditational and other monastic practices. After the rains, as per monastic rules, they used to move away from there for *'Cārikā'* (regular wandering of the monks).[4] Bamiyan is inclemently cold during the winter. This also probably compelled them to leave Bamiyan by the approach of winter and to move away to other places of less cold. It is very likely that the

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1. *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, Edt. by S.Mizuno, p.93.
2. In India, Nālandā Mahāvihāra was probably the largest centre of Buddhists in the past where ten thousand Buddhist monks resided, as also recorded by Hiuen-tsiang who himself stayed there for several years for study and by other Chinese travellers. Bamiyan caves are quite large in number, suggesting much more population of monks than what was in Nālandā.
3. *Marg*, Mulk Raj Anand, Vol.-XXIV, No. 2, p.5.
4. For *Vassāvasa*, see Upasak, C.S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 198-199.

monks who had spent their *Vassāvāsa* at Bamiyan used to move towards to the east, probably Jalalabad-Hadda region (ancient Uḍyāna) or even crossed the Hindu Kush to Taxila and further east to India to spend the cold season. It is interesting to notice numerous honey-combed caves dug in the hills all around Jalalabad, Baswal and other places. Migration to the east, from Kabul to Jalalabad, in winter, and from Jalalabad to Kabul in the west during summer is still a common practice of the people, particularly among the nomads, for Kabul being bitterly cold during winter and Jalalabad very hot during the summer.

In ancient days merchants and monks and wanderers followed the practice of postponing their journeys during the rains because of unsuitable climatic conditions. For Buddhist monks ecclesiastical rules were framed for this purpose by the Buddha. The Buddhist monks were also in practice to undertake long journeys along with the caravans (*Satthavāha*). They used to depend upon them for their subsistence. Those monks traveling in this area with the caravans, by the approach of rainy season (*Vassāvāsa*) used to stay here for three months finding it most a suitable place for monastic practices. Later on, some monks probably made it as their permanent 'residence', particularly when the Lokuttaravādins established their centre there. In the beginning, some caves were dug for their 'abodes' (*Āvāsa*),[1] but in due course, the number of caves started growing in proportion to the rising population of the monks. When the number of the monk-fraternity rose large, the full- fledged monasteries consisting of several caves developed, including *Uposathagaras* (a hall for ecclesiastical meetings), shrines, temples, guest-rooms or dormitories *(Upaṭṭhānasālas),* etc. besides the living cells. When Religion gained much popularity in the country, a large number of people became monks, and then the number of caves also grew accordingly.

Religious centres usually become renowned and gather importance because of a saint or saints who dwell there. Sometimes the support and munificence of kings, nobles or rich persons also gave impetus to their development. But it must be borne in mind that saints or sages are the real persons who carry intrinsic 'energy' for inculcating cultural and ethical values among the people. They stand as a pivot for the diffusion of the values in life. No religious movement can prosper without the active and spontaneous support of saintly personalities. They are the real upholders of the banner of the *Dhamma* or religion.

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1. See *Ibid.*, p. 34.

People naturally flock around them for deriving 'real good' or 'attaining peace of mind', sometimes for accruing merits merely by meeting them. Centres where such spiritually enlightened persons reside naturally grow into importance and sometimes remain as the places of pilgrimage for centuries. Sometimes scholars having saintly character also become the source of inspiration for the learneds. Nālandā was such a centre of Buddhist learning where a number of monk-scholars of erudite and saintly character dwelt; and because of their distinctive achievements, monk-scholars from the country and abroad assembled there in large numbers. It continued to be an eminent Buddhist centre of learning for centuries on account of these 'monk-scholars'.

Bamiyan also continued to be a great centre of Buddhists, probably for a longer period than Nālandā although not as an academic place. But how it become such a great monastic centre of Buddhists or who were the monk-saints who chose it first as their 'abode' (*āvāsa)* and started dwelling in the caves of Koh-i-Baba is difficult to know. We have no records available which can throw any light on this point, nor do we know any ruler or king who had extended his zealous support to raise this place to such a great eminence.

Lokuttaravādins

Hiuen-tsiang, the Chinese monk traveller and scholar who visited Bamiyan in about 630 A.D., found it a stronghold of the Lokuttaravādins who had earlier branched off from an early school of Buddhism called Mahāsāṅghika. We have seen elesewhere that the Mahāsāṅghika school came into existence after being separated from the early Theravāda Buddhism on the occasion of Second Buddhist Council, held at Vesali, one century after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, on some ecclesiastical and doctrinal view points.[1] It is said that the Mahāsāṅghikas migrated from Magadha into two streams, one towards the south and the other towards the north-west of India. The group that came to the north-west was again sub-divided into five sects, *viz.* Ekavyavahārika, Kaukulika or Kurullaka, Bahuśrutiya, Prajñaptivādin and Lukuttaravādin.[2] In the Pali texts the Lokuttaravāda is also described as 'Cetiyavāda' a branch of the Mahāsāṅghika school.[3] Probably the Lokuttaravāda got its name as Cetiyavāda because they gave prominence to the worship of the

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[1] *Mahāvaṃsa*, V.7, *Dīpavaṃsa*, V. 42; *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, p.69 ff. and others.

[2] Dutta, N. , *Buddhist Sects in India*, p. 60.

[3] *Ibid.*, p.60.

Cetiyas (Sanskrit = Caitya).[1] Some think that because they dwelt in the 'Caitya mountain' they were called Caityakas.[2] The Lokuttaravādins, after being separated from the North-Western Group of the Mahāsāṅghikas, settled in Uḍyāna or Jalalabad, the eastern-most region of Afghanistan. In the *Sariputra-Paripṛicchāsūtra*, (Chinese translation), it is mentioned that they resided in Uḍyāna. They dwelt there for a long period with the Sarvastivādins, Mahisasakas, Dharmaguptas and Kāśyapīyas.[3] The *Mahavastu*, the Vinaya text of the Lokuttaravādins, also confirms the view that they were a branch of the Mahasanghikas.[4] Mahādeva is said to be the founder of the Cetiyakas or Lokuttaravadins.[5] The *Kathāvatthu Aṭṭhakathā* (Commentary) (of about 5th century A.D.) refers to the different branches of both the groups of the south and north-west, which include Cetiyakas or Lokuttaravadins.[6] It may also be pointed out that Vasumitra, who flourished during the reign of Kaniṣka, the great Kuṣāṇa emperor (1st Century A.D.), and who is said to have composed the *Mahāvibhāṣāśastra* on the occasion of Fourth Buddhist Council, has dealt with the N.W. group of the Mahāsāṅghikas in greater details than the southern group, probably because Vasumitra was more familiar with those sects which were prevailing in that region. While dealing with their doctrinal views, he has grouped the Mahāsāṅghika, Ekavyavaharika, Kaukulikas and Lokuttaravādin together, simply because they differed from each other only on some minor viewpoints.[7] This affirms that the Lokuttaravādins were holding their separate identity at the time of Vasumitra (i.e. Kaniṣka's reign, 1st Cent. A.D.) and had their strongholds in N.W. region of Indian subcontinent, particularly in Gandhāra and Uḍyāna. Later on they moved to Bamiyan where they became predominant as recorded by Hiuentsiang. Their migration and settlement at Bamiyan probably took place quite early; as they had come into existence perhaps soon after the Second Buddhist Council, held one hundred years after the Parinibbāna of the Buddha.[8]

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[1] *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.913 ff.
[2] Dutta, N., *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
[3] *Ibid.*, p.60.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[5] See *JRAS*, 1910; also *DPPN*, Vol.-II, p.912.
[6] Dutta, N., *Buddhist Sects in India*, p. 68.
[7] Dutta, N.: *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[8] Cf. *Dīpavaṃsa-V: Nikkhante paṭhame vassasate, sampatte dutiye sate; Mahābhedo ajayatha, Theravādam uttamam.* *Verse-15; Mahāsāṅghika bhukkhū, vilomam akaṃsu sasanaṃ; Bhinditva mūlasaṅgham, aññam akaṃsu saṅghaṃ*. Verse-32.

Views of Lokuttaravādins

The Lokuttaravādins held the view that the worldly elements (*Laukika Dharmas*) are unreal; the real *dharmas* are supra-mundane.[1] With regard to the concept of the Buddha the Lokuttaravadins are of the view that the Buddha's body is entirely supra-mundane (*Lokuttara*); devoid of any impurities, vocal or physical or mental. His material body (*Rupakāya* or *Nirmāṇakāya*) is 'unlimited' and 'unmeasurable'; his length of life is unlimited; his divine power (*Tejas*, *Prabhāva*) is extra-ordinary; his compassion (*karuṇā*) is limitless; he has no dreams as his mind is like a mirror and can comprehend anything in one moment, being pure in all respects; he is aware that he cannot be reborn.[2]

The Lokuttaravadins attributed all other supra-mundane qualities and all 'perfections' including omniscience to the Buddha. The deification of the Buddha had begun very early; it can be noticed even in early Pali Buddhism; but it took new dimensions and gained prominence for the first time when the Lokuttaravādins and other similar co-branches of the Mahāsāṅghikas established their new tenets and dogmas of the Doctrine. As a matter of fact, their doctrinal leanings were more towards Mahāyāna or Buddhayāna and they prepared the ground for the advent of Mahāyāna school of Buddhism which flourished several centuries after the Christian era.[3] The Lokuttaravādins were probably more staunch adherents to the omniscient, supra-mundane form of the Buddha than the other co-branches of the Mahāsāṅghikas. They regarded the Buddha as '*Lokuttara*' in all respects. Probably this ideology of this group of Buddhism served as a constant inspirational guide-line when illustrating the Buddha in icons. The creation of two colossal images of the Buddha in the panoramic beautiful valley of Bamiyan is the outcome of this devotionally inspired faith of the Lokuttaravādin monks. Indeed the two colossi of the Buddha infused the sense of super-human and transcendent qualities of the Buddha in the mind of those who came to witness them. These images may be attributed to the Lokuttaravādins as they believed in such omniscient form of the Buddha.

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[1] Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, pp. 73-74.
[2] Dutta N. : *Ibid*, pp. 77-78.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

Śākyas of Bamiyan

Hiuen-tsiang relates a story of the migration of the Śākyas to Uḍyāna (Mod. Jalalabad) after their extermination from Kapilavatthu by Viḍūdabha, the king of Kośala. According to the story related by him, there lived four Śākya tribes during the life-time of the Buddha. They were attacked and then massacred by Viḍūḍabha, the son and successor of king Praśenajit of Kośala, as a revenge for being cheated by them. Some could save their lives and fled away for refuge to different countries. One of these Śākya princes, after traversing many countries, found his way to Uḍyāna. Later this Śākya prince became the king of this country with the help of a Nāga king. He had a son named Uttarasena, who after learning about the death of the Buddha, somehow or other managed to obtain the bone relics of the Buddha, rather lately. He got this body-relic of the Buddha enshrined in a stūpa. This stupa was witnessed by Hiuen-tsiang himself.[1] Sir Aurel Stein has identified this stūpa with Shankardar in the Swat valley which was once a part of Uḍyāna in the past.[2]

The Śākyas who established their kingdom in Uḍyāna probably got settled in Bamiyan in later years. When Hiuen-tsiang visited this centre, the king of the country was a Śākya, who showed special hospitality to him, and came to greet him. He himself came out and honoured him in the palace by offering something. The king of Bamiyan, as some think, was the descendant of the Śākya exile from Kapilavatthu who sometime later came to Bamiyan and became the king of the country. Hiuen-tsiang was probably received by the Śākya king.[3] We have no reason to disbelieve Hiuen-tsiang as his accounts are authentic; usually based on some reliable traditions known to the people. There appears to be some grain of truth in the story of the extermination and migration of the Śākyas. The early Pali Buddhist texts also affirm this story. It is related there that a branch of the Śākyas managed to escape to the Himalayas where they built a city.[4] One Pāṇḍu Śākya, son of Amitodana (brother of Suddhodana), crossed the Ganges and settled on the other side. His daughter was married to Pāṇḍukabhaya, the king of Sri Lanka. Migration of Śākyas to Uḍyāna and thereafter their rule over Bamiyan might have taken place quite in early period; it might have taken place even prior to the rule of the Mauryas.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 128-132.

[2] *M.A.S.I.*, Vol.-42, pp. 30-34.

[3] See Watters, J. : *On the Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, p.116.

[4] Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.972.

Tapassu and Bhallika appear to be the first persons to carry the 'message' of the Buddha to Afghanistan during the life-time of the Buddha, though not as missionaries. They were the caravan traders (*Satthavaha*) who used to take long journeys to distant countries. They were the persons who established cultural links, besides trade communications, between India and Afghanistan in a very early period. Taxila was a renowned centre of learning during the time of the Buddha. We know that Jīvaka Komārabhacca, the noted physician of Magadha, received his training in medical science at Taxila. Many students from Kāśī and other places were also studying there when Jivaka went there for his studies.[1] Thus, the North-Western part of Indian sub-continent was no longer unknown to the people of the eastern India during the Buddha's days. Probably direct quick communication services by means of horse carriages were also available in those days. In the *Majjhimanikāya* (*Rathavinīta Sutta*, No.-24) it occurs that Pasenadi, king of Kosala, took a journey from Sāvatthī to Sāketa by means of a relay carriage service driven by seven horses. It is possible that in other parts of the country also such arrangements were available.

That the North-Western region of the Indian sub-continent was known to the people of eastern India is also supported by many other facts. Uḍyāna being a contiguous region to Gandhāra was probably an equally familiar place to the people of eastern India.

It is very likely that under adverse circumstances some of the Śākyas, being escaped of the massacre done by the Kośala king Viḍūḍabha, fled to obscure places for safety and one of them took the route to the north-west and reached Uḍyāna, where later he established his rule. After sometime his family moved to Bamiyan. The actual event of migration of the Sākyas and their settlement in Uḍyāna, and later in Bamiyan, if at all, probably took place quite in early time.

The Buddhist monks and other mendicants, who were in the habit of taking long journeys along with the touring merchants (*Satthavāha*) in ancient India, might have reached Bamiyan along with these touring merchants who used to traverse long routes from Afghanistan to India, as we have seen in the case of Tapassu and Bhallika. Bamiyan lying on the 'silk route' served as a 'resting place.' It is not improbable if some Buddhist monks, while resting there temporarily found Bamiyan a suitable place for monastic life, and they would have chosen it for their 'permanent' abode. We have no source to warrant this presumption, but it certainly was accessible to those monks who dwelt at Taxila or Uḍyana. We have discussed above the advent of the Mahāsāṅghikas in Udyana, one hundred years after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, that is to say, more than a century before Asoka. We have also referred to Lokuttaravādins who had made their strongholds at Bamiyan sometime later. Although we have no archaeological evidence in this regard, we can only presume that the 'message' of the Buddha reached there quite early.

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[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Vol.-I, pp. 952-953; 957.

The Third Buddhist Council and Missionaries

The account of the Third Buddhist Council that we have referred to earlier and which took place at Pāṭaliputra during the reign of Aśoka (269-232 B.C.) also supports our presumption, although remotely. At the end of the Council's deliberations two Arahanta Theras were despatched to the N.W. region. One, Thera Majjhantika confined himself to Kaśmīra and Gandhāra while the other Thera Mahārakkhita was made responsible to propagate the Vibhajjavāda or Early Theravāda in the Yona county.[1] Yona country has been identified with the middle and N.W. interior regions of Afghanistan where the Greeks had settled since Alexander's days. It is very likely that Mahārakkhita made his strong-hold at Kapiśa, who then might have visited Bamiyan in order to counteract the Lokuttaravādins or the Mahāsāṅghikas who had already held their influence earlier there. Mahārakkhita is said to have been able to convert quite a large number of people into the Buddhist faith, which appears to be possible, for he received the royal support from Asoka who ruled over that area. The propagation then might have been taken intensively in order to counteract the great influence of the Mahāsāṅghika and its other branches of that area. This could have been possible on account of zealouṣ efforts of Emperor Aśoka, who patronised the Vibhajjavāda or the Early Theravāda school of Buddhism.

Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī Episode

An account that we come across in the *Life* and *Travels* of Hiuen-tisang is of some significance in this context. It is recorded there that Hiuen-tisang saw himself in a monastery, not very far from Bamiyan, the iron pot *(Pātra)* and the *Saṅghāṭī* stitched in nine parts, dyed in red colour, made of hemp of Thera *Shaṉg-no-kia-fo-sha* (*Sanakavasa*), a great Arahanta and the disciple of Ānanda Thera. Although his chief place of residence was at Mathura, he moved for sometime to Kipin from where, later he returned Mathura where he died. Hiuen-tsiang calls *Kipin* or *Campa* as the country of the *Yen-mo-na* i.e. of the Yavanas.[1] In the Pali texts Sanakavāsa is called Sambhūta Sānavāsī as he wore the robe of *Sana* or hemp. He is also said to have played a very important role in the Second Buddhist Council in exterminating the Mahāsāṅghika group from the main Saṅgha of the Tharavāda which we have seen earlier. At the time of the Second Buddhist Council he was then residing at the Ahoganga Pabbata, identified with the region of upper Ganges near Haridvar and Dehradoon in the Northern India.[2] It appears that he used to dwell at both the places, in the north-western and eastern part of India and also dwelt for some time in Kipin in Afghanistan. He made some place of his residence near Bamiyan also, as recorded by Hiuen-tsiang, perhaps for a very short period. According to Hiuen-tsiang, the Saṅghārāma where his iron pot and robe were preserved was only some *li* from Bamiyan. This tends to confirm our belief that he might have visited Bamiyan for some time in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas, who had settled there and to propagate his own faith of the Early Theravāda Buddhism.

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[1] *Mahāvamsa*, Chapter-XII, 56; Trans. Gieger W. : p. 85.

Foladi Valley

Not far from the main Koh-i-Baba range, where two colossal images of the Buddha stand, to the south-west at about three mile distance, there is a village called Āhangaran in the Foladi Valley. Here also we find a number of rock-cut caves with beautiful 'lantern designed' ceilings and also paintings on the walls, the traces of which can still be seen in some of the caves. In Bamiyan area, this appears to be another important centre of Buddhism. Probably it was the main centre of Early Theravāda Buddhism, a place of Arahantas or of the people belonging to Arahantayāna. The village Ahangaran appears to have derived its present name from the term *Aharantānam,* meaning the place of the Arahanta or Arahantas. It appears that after the Mahāsāṅghikas or the Lokuttaravādins had settled at the Koh-i-Baba hill, the early Theravādins made their centre at this place.

It may also be presumed that although Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī had his main residence at Kipin or Kapiśa, he might have dwelt for some time at Ahangaran and established a centre of Early Theravāda there against the Mahāsāṅghikas or the Lokuttaravādins. It also appears that this centre of the Early Theravāda or the Vibhajjavāda could not thrive as against the Mahasanghikas or the Lokuttaravadins who had established their firm influence over there. It may have also been possible that Mahārakkhita Thera, who visited the Yona country, the central and western part of Afghanistan, during the time of Aśoka, might have visited Bamiyan and might have stayed at Ahangaran (Foladi Valley) for some time to propagate the Early Theravāda Buddhism for which he was despatched to this area by the Third Buddhist Council held at Pāṭaliputra. Perhaps his efforts too could not gain much ground there because of the greater influence of the other school of Buddhism already in existence.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp. 53-54; *On the Buddhist Records of the Western World*: Bk.I, p. 53; Watters, T. : op.Cit., pp. 120-121.

[2] Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol. II, p. 232; Upadhyaya, B.S. : *Prachina Bauddhakalina Bharatiya Bhugola*, p. 127.

Bamiyan a Centre of Theravada School of Buddhism

We have seen above that the iron pot and the robe of Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī were preserved in a Saṅghārāma near Bamiyan as mentioned by Hiuen-tsiang. This fact is of great significance so far as the history of Buddhism in Bamiyan is concerned. This goes to suggest that somehow or other Bamiyan rose to a centre of Theravāda Buddhism which was earlier introduced by the Mahāsāṅghikas or by its branch, the Lokuttaravadins and later by Sanakavāsa or Sambhūta Sāṇavāsi who was an Arahanta, and so received veneration and esteem from all the Buddhists there, whether of Hinayāna or Mahāyāna schools. Hiuen-tsiang who belonged to Mahāyāna school also paid a visit to his Sanghārāma where his pot and robe were preserved to venerate them. Probably the Foladi valley complex was the centre of Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda school of Buddhism while the Koh-i-Baba complex remained as a centre of the other school, the Mahāsāṅghika or its branch, the Lokuttaravādin, who had earlier separated from the main Sangha of the Early Theravāda. We will however discuss this matter in detail elsewhere, but Bamiyan however, continued to flourish as a centre of Hinayāna Buddhism throughout its history.

Alexander the Great & Bamiyan

That Bamiyan rose as a centre of those Theravādin monks who were earlier separated from the Early Theravāda school on the occasion of the Second Buddhist Council held at Vesālī, a century after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, appears to be a fact. And so, by the time of the invasion of Alexander the Great on Afghanistan, Buddhism appears to have already gained some ground there. When Alexander the Great marched into Afghanistan after capturing the

Persian capital in the west, seizing their treasures and symbolically burning Persepolis, he crossed the Hindu Kush range in about 330 B.C. After conquering the Satrapies of Bactria and Sogdiana, Alexander established permanent posts by founding new towns after his own name, namely, Alexandria in Aria (Herat), Alexandria in Arachosia and Alexandria of Causcasus (Begram or a site in the northern Kohistan or Kabul).[1] In order to reach Kabul from Sogdiana and Bactria it was necessary to cross the Hindu Kush through Bamiyan, which lay on the ancient route. Alexander might have passed through Bamiyan, marching from Balkh to the east to Kapisa, and then on to Kabul. His forces passed off Bamiyan rather quietly, without taking notice of it, for being of no strategic importance. Moreover Alexander had the least interest in theological centres as he had the designs only to conquer the countries instead of plundering or destroying the religious centres. He never indulged in persecuting any religion or destroying any such centres. Bamiyan thus remained unhurt and continued to flourish as before.

Candragupta Maurya and Bamiyan

It is well known that Alexander the Great did not cross the Ravi and turned back home from there. He suddenly died at Babylon in 323 B.C. on his way back to Greece. Soon after his retreat from the Punjab, Candragupta Maurya established his empire and put the Punjab under his hegemony and ruled over a vast kingdom from Pāṭaliputra, the capital in Magadha. After Alexander's death his empire was divided by his military generals among themselves as he had no successor to inherit. Seleucus Niketor who established his control over Syria and some parts of West Asia, made plans to recover the territories that lay in the south-east of Afghanistan and in the Indus valley, which were once conquered by Alexander the Great. He could easily over-run the territories in Afghanistan; but when he crossed the Hindu Kush and reached the bank of the Indus, he found the whole situation entirely changed where he had to face a mighty emperor Candragupta who had already established his sway over that region. Seleucus had to abandon his plans as he faced a defeat and was forced to enter into an alliance with Candragupta Maurya. He had to cede back the Satrapies of Gandhāra, Aria, Arachosia, Gadrosia and Paropamisadae and also to give his daughter in marriage to the Mauryan emperor. In return, as a gesture of good-will, Candragupta Maurya gave him 500 elephants, which he used in other battles in the West that he had to fight.

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[1] Allchin, F.R. & Hammond, N. : *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 188-189.

When Candragupta Maurya came to the throne (in C. 320 B.C.), Buddhism was already flourishing in India and also in many other parts of Afghanistan. By then Buddhism had probably reached Bamiyan as well. Obviously, for the firm administrative control over the newly got provinces of Afghanistan, he must have stationed able and efficient officers and military personnels over these areas. As a result, a direct link between Afghanistan and India was then established. This political change opened several new dimensions. Afghanistan being the integral part of Mauryan empire, religious and cultural activities also got new impetus. Religious wanderers and mendicants from the main land must have got better and more congenial atmosphere there than before. But we have no source of information which can throw light on the cultural activities pursued during Candragupta Maurya's reign. Buddhism which was already flourishing in India and already introduced into Afghanistan, should have received further impetus from the monks who used to visit this country on their usual sojourns. The personnels from India stationed in Afghanistan by the emperor must have had their natural sympathy and support to the Buddhist cultural activities carried out by the monks from India or even by the local monks already engaged in religious pursuits.

Bindusāra & Bamiyan

Candragupta Maurya's son and successor, Bindusara, who ruled from C. 298 B.C. to 273 B.C. had his control over the territories that he inherited from his father including the provinces of Afghanistan. Bindusāra established political contacts with many countries in the West. Buddhism had since penetrated into Afghanistan and centres of the Mahāsāṅghikas had already been established in Uḍyāna, Bamiyan and other places. Buddhist monk-pilgrims coming from the West and the monks coming from India probably had a common meeting place at Bamiyan where they used to stay temporarily and practised and discussed the religion and philosophy of the Master. Although we have no literary or other source materials which can help us to know the religious condition that was prevailing there, no doubt Buddhism was gaining ground there through the efforts of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the other Theravāda schools already established there.

Aśoka, the Great Buddhist Emperor

Aśoka's reign is the haulmark in the history of Buddhism when the Saddharm received new dimensions in the country and aboard.

Aśoka is said to have leanings towards the early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda and during his time the Third Buddhist Council was convened in the capital, Pāṭaliputra.[1] We have already mentioned the epoch-making decision of the Council to despatch missionaries to different distant places in India and also abroad under the leadership of spiritually elevated able monk-saints. We have also earlier mentioned the names of Thera Majjhantika who went to Kaśmīra and Gandhāra and of Thera Mahārakkhita who came to proselytise Afghanistan, which was then known as Yona country. We have also referred to a monk of Yona country, Yonaka Dhammarakkhita by name, who was made responsible to propagate Buddhism in the Aparantaka region in India itself. It is very significant so far as the history of Buddhism is concerned. We know that the Yona country was a part of the Mauryan empire. In the Rock Edict V and XIII of Aśoka, Yonas and Cambojas are referred to as the tribes inhabiting in his empire; and their countries formed the frontiers of his empire. Yonas were none other than the Greeks already settled in Afghanistan since the time of Alexander the Great. Yonaka Dhammarakkhita hailed from somewhere in this region and probably before coming to Pāṭaliputra he himself was initiated into Buddhism as a monk in his own motherland. He came to India for higher training and learning in which he attained proficiency. He was then selected as one of the leaders of the missionaries. Yonaka Dhammarakkhita was well-versed in the scriptures. When he went to Aparantaka country, he delivered the Aggikhandhopama Sutta (A Sutta from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*; IV, p. 128 ff.), in which the Buddha has stressed the ideal life of a monk. The same Sutta is said to have been delivered by Mahinda when he went to Sri Lanka for the same purpose. It is mentioned that by hearing the discourse of Yonaka Dammarakkhita, a large number of people were converted and some thirty seven thousand received the *Pabbajjā* (ordination) in the Sangha.[2] This success in proselytism shows his great saintly character and proficiency and learning. It also tends us to believe that probably Yonaka Dhammarakkhita had his earlier training and learning in scriptures in his own country where Buddhism had already been introduced. He perfected himself coming over to India, the homeland of Buddhism.

Thera Mahārakkhita who came to Yona country to propagate the Early Tharavāda Buddhism or Vibhajjavāda probably first settled in

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1. *Mahāvaṃsa*, Chapter-V, *Dīpavaṃsa*, Chapter-VII; *Samantapasādikā*, p.323 (Nalanda). *Mahāvaṃsatika* (Nalanda) Chapter-V, etc.
2. *Dīpavaṃsa*, VIII.7; *Mahāvaṃsa*, XII.4; *Samantapasādikā* (Nalanda), Vol. I, p. 87.

Uḍyāna and then moved on to the Kapiśa area. Whether he visited Bamiyan is not known from any source since we do not know the next part of Yona country in which he got settled. Bamiyan was a stronghold of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Lokuttaravādins, another branch of the same school. It may be reasonably assumed that he might have visited Bamiyan in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghika group who were already established there. We have discussed earlier the episode of Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī who had earlier come to Kipin and probably to Bamiyan to propagate the Early Theravāda Buddhism. Mahārakkhita too had come for the same purpose in Afghanistan. We have also pointed out earlier that the place, now called Ahangaran in the Foladi valley, was probably the centre of Early Theravada Buddhism. Mahārakkhita might have come to this centre to strengthen the Early Tharavāda which was earlier introduced by Arahanta Sambhuta Sanavasi. By the efforts of Thera Mahārakhita, also supported by the emperor Aśoka, the pure form of Early Tharavāda Buddhism might have received further impetus; and thus the centres at Ahangaran in the Foladi valley might have developed further. But probably the Early Theravāda could not prosper long as we find the centres at Bamiyan thrived for centuries only as the strongholds of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Lokuttaravādins.

The Indo-Greek Buddhist King Menander and Bamiyan

After the disintegration of the Mauryan empire its provinces started becoming independence; and some succumed to stronger rulers. The provinces of Afghanistan (Aria, Arachosia, Gadrosia and Paropamisadae), which were once the parts of the Mauryan dominion, were reoccupied by the Indo-Greeks, also known as Indo-Bactrians. A number of Indo-Greek kings are known only by their coins discovered from several places in Afghanistan and Gandhāra where they actually ruled. Numismatic studies have however been helpful in reconstructing the history of these kings to some extent.[1] Out of these numerous kings known by their coins, only one king, Menander or Milinda is referred to in a Pali text, the *Milindapañho.* In this Pali work as we have seen earlier, he is said to have been born in a village called 'Kalasi' in 'Alasanda' (or Alexandria). His capital was at Sāgala, identified with modern Sialkot in Pakistan. His rule probably extended from Balkh in the west to Mathura in the east. Some believe that his rule extended upto Allahabad.[1] The *Milindapañho* informs us that he adopted Buddhism under the influence of one Buddhist monk, Nāgasena by name. That he was a patron of Buddhism is also testified by the Buddhist symbols that we notice on his coins, such as the representations of the Dammacakra, elephant, lion etc. Menander as a Buddhist followed the Early Theravāda school of Buddhism as known from the *Milindapañho*. Although we do not know much about his religious activities, it may however be presumed that his patronage to Early Theravāda Buddhism might have brought some impetus in his kingdom. We have earlier discussed that Ahangaran (in the Foladi valley), not very far from the main Bamiyan valley, was probably a centre of Early Theravāda school of Buddhism. It is possible that some new monastic establishments might have come up at this place during his reign, although we have no source to confirm our presumption. It is likely that the Buddhist fraternity might have received his support and patronage. No wonder if he could have visited Bamiyan to pay his homage to the *Patra* (bowl) and *cīvara* (robe) of Arahanta Thera Sumbhūta Sāṇavāsī which were preserved in a Saṅghārāma, near Bamiyan as recorded by Hiuen-tsiang. He would probably have also paid visit to the tooth-relic of the Buddha which was enshrined in a vihāra near Bamiyan. It is true that we have not yet found any archaeological evidence in support of the accounts of Hiuen-tsiang; but his records cannot be entirely discarded.

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[1] Cf. Tarn, W.W. : *Greeks in Bactria and India*; Narain, A.K. : *The Indo-Greeks*; Banerjee, G.N. : *Hellenism in Ancient India.*

The Kuṣāṇa Rule & Bamiyan

It is generally believed that the Yueh-chi tribe of Central Asia had settled in Bactria and other mountain territories of the former Indo-Greek kings.[2] The Yueh-chi tribe was later divided into five principalities. The principality of the Kuṣāṇa tribe became most powerful and ultimately succeeded in subduing the other principalities and destroyed them completely. This took place probably by the beginning of the Christian era. The Chinese Annals have maintained the records of the Kuṣāṇa invasions on *An-hsi* (Parthia) and their control over *Kao-fu* (Kabul) and destruction of *P'u-ta* and *Chi-pin* (The Punjab and Kaśmīra or Kapiśa).[3]

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[1] Sharma, G.R. : *Reh Inscription of Menander and the Indo-Greek Invasion of the Ganga Valley.*

[2] Allchin, F.R. & Hammond, N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-233.

[3] Cf. Puri, B.N. : *India Under Kushans*, p. 143.

Kaniṣka & Buddhism

The early Kuṣāṇa kings, Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises are known to have followed the faith of Saivism. But the successor of Vima, Kaniṣka, in a well-known devout Buddhist king. He was the most powerful king of the dynasty and ruled over a vast territory which included India, Central Asia and some portions of China. Kaniṣka made Kapiśa in Afghanistan as one of his capitals in the west. Kaniṣka's zeal and patronage to Buddhism are well-known. Under his patronage the Fourth Buddhist Council was convened at Kundalavana in Kaśmīra as referred to by Hiuen-tsiang, Taranatha and by Paramartha (499-509A.1) in his work, the *Life of Vasubandhu*.. This was the convention of the Sarvastivadi school of Buddhism and on this occasion the *Vibhāṣā-śāstra* was composed.[1] That Kaniṣka was associated with this school of Buddhism is also evident from Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri inscription in which specific reference to the Sarvastivādins occurs.[2] The existence of the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Lokuttaravādins during his period is supported both by literary as well as epigraphical evidence.[3] Certainly Bamiyan was a flourishing centre of the Lokuttaravādins; and as such it is likely that they might have received some sort of patronage from Kaniṣka. It may also be presumed that some of the early caves of Bamiyan might have been dug during his rule, although we have no definite archaeological or other evidences to support.

The period of Kaniṣka's rule is regarded as the beginning of the Mahāyāna or Buddhayana form of Buddhism in which Bodhisattva ideal got a new connotation and practice. It was later very much popularised in Central and West Asia and also in India and elsewhere. Bamiyan which was one of the earliest centres of Theravāda school of Buddhism, as we have discussed earlier, could not remain unaffected from this wave of new theological change that was taking place in Buddhism. The ideology of Lokuttaravādins, taking the Buddha as supra-mundane in all respects, acted as a precursor to Mahāyāna or Buddhayāna, and the deification of the Buddha began to receive popularity among the public. The representation of the figure of the Buddha on sculptures certainly got new dimensions and as a result, several forms of local arts emerged including the different scenes and anecdotes connected with the life of the Buddha. The so called 'Gandhāra art' or 'Indo-Graeko art' is supposed to have developed during this period. Some scholars are of the view that the earliest image of the Buddha in this art is noticed on the reliquary deposited by Kaniṣka, discovered by Spooner from Sha-Ji-Ki-Dheri near Peshawar.[1] Kaniṣka is the first Buddhist emperor who issued coins depicting the figure of Śākyamuni Buddha or Buddha with the legend BODDO and Sakyamuni. A copper coin of the Kaniṣka has been recovered by Masson at Bamiyan which supports his rule over this region. Our presumption may carry some weight that the Lokuttaravādins, in accordance with their doctrinal belief, got inspired to carve out the colossal images of the Buddha in this area in order to deify Him as supramundane in all respects, say in about the 3rd century A.D.. It is very likely that during the time of Kaniṣka and his successors, cave-monasteries started coming up as the Buddhist establishments which continued for centuries till the seventh century A.D.[2] The large extent of caves at Bamiyan, which come to about twenty thousand in number, naturally involved a great time and also a vast energy to create them.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[2] *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II(i), No.-LXXII, pp. 135-137.

[3] Puri, B.N. : *op.cit.*, p. 144.

The Sassanians

By the middle of the 3rd century A.D. the Sassanian dynasty of Iran took the benefit of the disintegration and destruction of the Kusāṇa empire. They defeated them and took control over Bamiyan region and included it as a part of their new kingdom. But, the local king of Bamiyan soon regained a semi-independent status by recognizing the Sassanian suzerainty. Although the Sassanians followed Zarathushtra as their faith and worshipped the Fire, they probably did not disturb the Buddhist fraternity residing at Bamiyan. Buddhism continued to thrive as before. This is confirmed by the accounts of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Fa-hien who probably visited this place in about 430 A.D.[3] He probably stayed there for some time and spent his *Vassāvāsa* (Rainy Season Resort) for three months. He calls this country *'Yu-hwuy'*, which is, however, not yet perfectly identified.[4] From Bamiyan, after the Rainy Season Resort, he went on to the hills and reached *Keeh-ch'a*.. While he was there, the king of the country was holding the *'Pañca Pariṣad'*. (Probably the *Pavāraṇā* ceremony or *Kaṭhina Civaradāna* ceremony held after the Vassāvasa, in which Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunīs, Sāmaṇeras, Sāmaṇerīs and Upāsakas, all the five groups assemble on this occasion). The king requested for the presence of the Śramanas (Buddhist monks) belonging to all the quarters *(Āvāsas)*.[1] They came as if in clouds and the place of the session was elegantly decorated. The king and his ministers presented the offerings to the monks. This lasted for one, two, three, five or even seven days. Fa-hien further informs us that 'the country, lying among the hills and being cold, does not produce the other cereals; and only the wheat gets ripe and the king always begs for the monks to make the wheat ripen. There is also a tooth-relic of the Buddha for which the people have reared a tope connected with which there are more than a thousand monks and their disciples, all students of Hīnayāna.[2] Obviously the king of the country was a devout Buddhist and held the Buddhist monks in high reverence, who belonged to Hīnayāna School of Buddhism. When Fa-hien visited Bamiyan, the collossal images were yet to be carved out as he does not mention anything about them, a matter which otherwise could never remain unnoticed by him. He probably stayed in one of the cave monasteries that were the 'abodes' of the Hīnayāna monks, probably little away from the main Bamiyan monastery, perhaps in a monastery in the Foladi valley near the village Aharangaran (Arahantānam). Unfortunately Fa-hien does not mention the name of the monastery where he stayed for three months of Vassāvāsa. The Hīnayāna monks there probably included Early Theravadins, and also the Mahasanghikas or the Lokuttaravadins, some at the Foladi Valley and some at Bamiyan proper.

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[1] *A.S.I., A.R.* 1908-9, pp. 38-59; C.I.I.-II(i), pp. 135-137, No.-LXXII; Puri, B.N. : *India Under the Kushānas*, p. 189.

[2] *Marg* Vol. -XXIV No.-2; Dupree, N.H.; *The colossal Buddha and the Monastic Grottos*, p.-17.

[3] Cf. *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2(1971), B.B. Lal, p.4.

[4] Legge, James: *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms*, pp. 21-22.

The Sassanian art has left a clear impact on the Bamiyan artefacts. There is ample evidence which exhibits Sassanian influence, as we notice typical stylistic features in the costumes of many figures, both in paintings and in sculptures. So also, there exist a number of symbols of pure Sassanin origin, such as, boar's head, birds having beads in their beaks etc. But it is remarkable to note that the art at Bamiyan was equally influenced by Indian and Greek stylistic designs, then current in those countries; and as such, the art of Bamiyan represents a heterogeneous characters, a combination of different styles. This mixed form of art of Bamiyan cannot be regarded as indigenous nor can it be ascribed purely due to political vicissitudes. These features of art lead us to infer that the Buddhist Saṅgha of Bamiyan which included monks from many countries was mostly responsible for the decorations and embellishments of the cave monasteries, as these were their 'abodes'. We know, the Buddhist Saṅgha was open to all,

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1. For *Āvāsa* see: Upasak, C.S., : *D.E.B.M.T.*, p. 34.
2. Legge, James : *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

without any prejudice or bias to caste, creed or nationality and remained heterogeneous in character from the very beginning. As elsewhere, so also in Bamiyan, monks of Sassanian origin dwelt there along with Indian, Greek, or local monks; and they all equally contributed to decorate the caves as the monk-artists. We also notice traces of foreign art even on Ajanta paintings in India obviously for the same reason.

Hūṇas or Hepthalites

Just before the middle of the fifth century A.D. Afghanistan witnessed another wave of invaders who attacked and ransacked the country. They were the Hephthalites or Hūṇas, who were the nomadic barbarians and had little regard for religion or ethics. Wherever they invaded, they not only created devastations by plundering and massacring the people but also made persecutions against the established religions. It is generally believed that they did persecutions against Buddhism and attempted to exterminate it from Kabul, Swat, Peshawar and Gandhāra but their devastations lasted only for a short period, because of their advance being halted by the Gupta empire in the east in India and Sassanians and Turks in the west in Afghanistan and eastern Iran.[1] It appears that Bamiyan, somehow or other, escaped the impetuosity of the Hepthalites probably because it lay off on the south route which they did not traverse.[2] Buddhism remained unhurt and flourished undiminished as before in Bamiyan.

Hiuen-tsiang visits Bamiyan

Hiuen-tsiang, the famous Chinese monk scholar, visited Bamiyan on way to pilgrimage to India, sometime in the early 7th century A.D., He stayed there for several days and describes, as an eye-witness, the flourishing state of this great Buddhist monastic establishment. He says, "There are some tens of Buddhist monasteries (*Vihāras* or *Āvāsas*) with several thousand Brethrens. They belong to the 'Little Vehicle' and follow the school of Lokuttaravādins."[3] He met there two monk-scholars of eminence belonging to Mahāsāṅghika school. They were Āryadasa and Āryasena by name, who were great scholars and deeply versed in the Law (*Dharma* or Doctrine). They held discussions with him and were very much impressed by the sagacity of Hiuen-tsiang. They took him around the monasteries and offered him all sorts of hospitality.[1] Āryadasa and Āryasena, as their names suggest, probably were Indian monks who were then dwelling in Bamiyan. It is possible that monks from other parts of western or eastern countries also were residing at this great monastic establishment.

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p. 15.

[2] *Marg* Vol. XXIV, No.-2, Mulkraj Ananda, p.-7.

[3] Watters, T. : *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, -116; Cf. Beal, S. : *Life of Huien-tsiang*, p.-52; *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-50.

Hiuen-tsiang also appreciates the devotional faith that the people of the country had in the Religion. He says, "These people are remarkable among all their neighbours, for a love of religion (a heart of pure faith), for the highest form of worship of 'three jewels', down to the worship of the hundred (different) spirits, there is not the least absence (decrease) of earnestness and utmost devotion of heart."[2] Hiuen-tsiang is true in depicting the exact state of Buddhism in this country. Although the people appears to have been led astray by believing in hundreds of spirits, the main tenets of the Religion were also faithfully followed by them. It should be noted that believing in spirits and gods is a well-known feature of Buddhism. Mention of the spirits and *devatās* is found in the earliest Pali Buddhist literatures; and their anecdotes, their meeting with the Buddha are abundant in the early Theravāda Pali Tipitaka.[3] And as such, if the people of Bamiyan believed in spirits, it should not be regarded as a sign of degeneration of Buddhism, as some scholars are prone to think. That the people of Bamiyan followed the 'pure faith' and showed devotional veneration to the 'Three Jewels' (Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha) tend us to infer that Bamiyan probably remained as a centre of the early form of Buddhism. And by the time when Hiuen-tsiang came to Bamiyan in the early 7th century A.D, the Lokuttaravādins were then predominant there. We have no definite account as to how and when the Lokuttaravādins made this place as their stronghold, but certainly before 3rd century A.D. when they established their monasteries there. The Small Buddha is supposed to have been erected in the middle of 5th century A.D. or so, which is the creation of this group. The Mahāsāṅghikas, who established their centre soon after being separated from the main branch of Theravāda established at Uḍyāna, say, round about 350 B.C., i.e. about 133 years after the

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[1] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 50.

[3] The *Petavatthu* and the *'Vimānavatthu* of the *Khuddakanikāya*; the *Nidhikaṇḍasutta* and the *Tirokuḍḍasutta* of the *Khuḍḍakapatha* are the texts about the spirits and gods. And also, at many places, mention of varied names of Gods is found in Pali texts. On several occasions Buddha is described as being worshipped by these celestial beings. Even some discourses of Buddha are delivered to such unworldly beings.

Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha. The emergence of the Lokuttaravādins from the Mahāsaṅghika group might have taken place sometime later after a century or two; and if so, their centre at Bamiyan might have been established sometime in early first century B.C. or even before; but certainly before the Kuṣāṇas. In the seventh century A.D., Hiuen-tsiang witnesses Bamiyan as a very flourishing centre of Hīnayāna and Lokuttaravādins *(Shroo-Ch'uh-Shi-Pu)* with several thousand monks dwelling in tens of monasteries.

The king of Bamiyan was a devout Buddhist and Hiuen-tsiang speaks him of a descendant of the Sakyas' exiled from Kapilavatthu. As a devout Buddhist the king invited Hiuen-tsiang and received him in his palace and paid his veneration by offering him some religious gifts.[1] When the Chinese Traveller was there, probably the *Pavāraṇā* ceremony (a well-known ecclesiastical ceremony held at the end of the *Vassāvāsa* or Rainy Season Resort) was being held.[2] Perhaps he also witnessed the *Kaṭhina* ceremony which was held at a place to the east of the city some 12 or 13 *li* in a *Vihāra* where the figure of the Buddha in the Mahaparinibbāna pose was carved out. It was a huge figure of about 1000 feet or so. Hiuen-tsiang further informs us that in this function the king of the country, every time assembles the great congregation of the '*Wu-cha*' (*Mokṣa Pariṣad*), he renounces all his possessions including the country's treasures and even offers his own body.[3] This act of beneficence by the king was indeed due to his devotion to the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. *Mokṣa Pariṣad* is the *Pavaraṇā* ceremony in which the recitation of the *Patimokkha* is done at the end of the Vassāvāsa. Hiuen-tsiang himself attended this function as a devout monk, as per ecclesiastical rule in which all the monks must attend. The king was also present along with his ministers and family members.

The account as given by Hiuen-tsiang stands as a testimony to the fact that Buddhism was followed and practised with firm belief and devotion, as it was in a flourishing state in Bamiyan. It appears that although it was a stronghold of the Lokuttaravādins, monks belonging to all the other schools also dwelt there with amity and coherence and joined together in all the ecclesiastical functions. Bamiyan probably had become a most favourite place of all the Buddhist monks where they used to flock during the summer season when it was pleasant and

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1. Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p. 116.
2. For details see Upasak, C.S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 147-148.
3. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 52; Watters, T. : Op.cit., p.-119; Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p. 53.

stayed there till the end of the *Vassāvasa* (Rainy Season Resort) i.e. upto the full-moon day of the Kārtika month (October). After performing the *Pavāraṇā* they used to move away from there for wandering (*Cārika*) as per ecclesiastical rule. It appears that the monks in large number used to assemble there, not only from the country itself but also from all the other neighbouring and distant countries like India, Gandhāra, Iran and others. Naturally to provide them residences caves started to be dug out by the lay-devotees, kings, nobles and rich merchants all alike, and in course of time the number of caves increased steadily and rose large in number to some twenty thousand. Because of natural beauty and serene and cool atmosphere which pervaded the whole valley of Bamiyan, extremely pleasant during summer, and also that it lay on the main trade route, monks usually preferred to dwell at this place during the months of summer and rains. Bamiyan is rather hard to live during winter and probably because of this climatic conditions most of the monks used to move away for 'wanderings' *(Cārikā)* after the *Pavāraṇā*. Only a few monks, who could endure cold, dwelt there during the winter to look after the cave monasteries. This fact gets support if we take into account the varied plans of the construction of these caves. It is remarkable to note that the number of dwelling cells (usually with an ante-chamber to be used when it is bitterly cold) is far less than the halls or spacious rooms which were obviously meant for accommodating many monks, used as dormitories particularly during the 'rainy season resort' of three months. It appears that, notwithstanding the enormous number of cave residences there, Bamiyan never remained as a 'permanent residence' of many monks. The caves served only as 'temporary abodes' of the monks who used to throng there at the advent of the summer or during the Vassāvāsa, when their movement was prohibited according to monastic rules.

A Cosmopolitan Centre

It is very difficult to say whether only the Lokuttaravādins of Hīnayāna group had their centres at Bamiyan. Perhaps other sects of Mahāyāna Buddhism also had their monastic establishments there. The paintings on the walls,. the adorned figures of the Buddha and Maitreya(?) and other celestial beings appearing there suggest the existence of other groups of Buddhist schools who used to dwell there,[1] although we lack in evidences to know exactly about the other schools there. It is only Hui-cha'o, a Korean monk, who visited this place in 727 A.D., leaves us an account in the *Fan-yin* saying that 'the king and the people are very devoted to the 'three Jewels'; monasteries and priests are in abundance and they practise Great Vehicle as well as Little Vehicle.[1] This is for the first time that we hear about both the schools (Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna) flourishing side by side in Bamiyan.

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[1] Cf. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia* Part-I (Published by E.J. Brill), p.22 & 27, Figures No.-35&55.

It may be pointed out that the Arabs overran the Sassanians and defeated them decisively in 641 A.D.. The first significant Arab push into Afghanistan was made through Kandahar (not via Bamiyan) in 699-700 A.D. when the Later Kuṣāṇa king of Kabul was defeated. But thereafter, he and the other local rulers were allowed to rule under the control of the Arab military governors.[2] We do not know what was the status of the king of Bamiyan. The small principality of this region seems to have escaped the fury of the Arabs at this time, and the Buddhist population of Bamiyan remained uneffected, at least for another century or so after the departure of Hiuen-tsiang in about 630 A.D. This fact is also confirmed by the accounts of the Korean monk, Hui-ch'ao. We notice that not only the king of Bamiyan was a devout Buddhist but his chiefs and the people had firm faith in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The monastic establishments had then grown numerous in which a large number of monks belonging to both the groups, Mahāyāna and Hinayana, were dwelling with full amity. This account of the Korean monk is significant for the history of Buddhism in Bamiyan pointing that Bamiyan flourished uninterruptedly as a great centre of Buddhism for about ten centuries. Lokuttaravādins had their stronghold there for a longer period and perhaps only in later times the Mahāyāna could also establish its centres there. A survey of Buddhism at Bamiyan however reveals that it remained mostly a Hīnayāna centre of Buddhism throughout for several centuries since the beginning.

Foladi Valley and Kakrak

Not far from the Koh-i-Baba mountain where two colossal images of the Buddha stand and where the largest number of caves exist, there are two other Buddhist sites of importance where numerous caves with paintings and sculptures have been found. These are (1) Deh-i-Ahangaran in Foladi Valley and (2) Kakrak. Foladi valley is located to the south-west of the Koh-i-Baba while Kakrak stands to the south-east, across the Kalon river.

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *the Valley of Bamiyan*, p. 58 (Translated from Chinese by Paul Pillot).
[2] Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, pp. 16-17.

Deh-i-Āhangaran

In the Foladi Valley, close to a village called Ahangaran or Deh-i-Ahangaran, a great many caves, mostly designed in 'lantern roof' style, stand in which some faint paintings can also be seen. The caves are distributed over four to five storeys, but a large number of land slides in the rocky wall had nearly destroyed all the upper grottoes, blocked up the lower ones and severely damaged those located in the middle storeys. Those in three storeys or two storeys are in a better condition. The caves are carved in different forms and dimensions. Some of them are square in shape and some rectangular. They measure also differently. Some of them are 3.50 to 2.50 mtrs. while others measure 11.40 mtrs. Most of them are with the varandahs in front and are usually joined by corridors. Some of the rooms contain niches, some small and some large in sizes. Most of the roofs of these caves are in lantern design; few are vaulted. The smaller caves were obviously used as living cells while the large halls were meant for the congregational purposes or used as dormitories and some were certainly the shrine rooms. Some halls are so large that they measure 11.40 x 4.60 meters. A small quadrangular cubicle is also noticed, with a bench running around three sides, which was probably used for small group discussions.

Art-Style

The walls of these caves were plastered and decorated with paintings, traces of which are still visible in many. The typical architecture of false beams recurs in most of the grottoes' stemming from the wooden prototype known as *'Lanterndecke'*. Some believe it to be Iranian in origin; and others compare with the art of Central Asia, Tun-Huang in China and of Korea; but we believe it to be the indigenous, as we have seen above in reference to Bamiyan.[1] The grottoes are usually embellished with a series of small arches, modelled in stucco figures. The pictorial decorations are mostly damaged; only on some walls scarce traces of the contours of the figures remain, the few pieces still surviving in the ceilings have fresh colours. The paintings are supposed to have been done with the "Asian frescoes" technique which is something between tempera and dry fresco painting. They also show Indian influence which can be compared with the Gupta period art, and the scheme lending to the Central Asian influences. Some element of Sassanian art can also be noticed on the motifs of the waving ribbons over the stūpas. Similarly Gandhāra style on some figures can also be seen. These paintings are usually dated to 5th or 6th century A.D.[1]

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[1] Umbretto Scarrato : A short-note on Some Recently Discovered Buddhist Grottoes near Bamiyan, Afghanistan *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-XI, 2-3, June-September, 1960, p. -160.

No definite reasons for the appearance of these different forms and styles found simultaneously in one group of paintings have been suggested. But if we look into the nature and form of the Buddhist community who have done these paintings by dwelling in these grottoes, we can arrive at a conceptual inference bearing some consistency. We know that the Buddhist monastic Order, as a rule, is open to all who deserve and desire to join it with a view to achieving the higher goal of life. No restrictions of caste, creed, or nationality stand on the way for joining the Buddhist Saṅgha. At one place the Buddha himself describes the composition of the Saṅgha as the sea. He says, "As all the rivers coming from different directions with their individual colours, tastes of waters meet the sea and then they lose their previous identities of colour or taste etc. and they all become one, so also the individuals coming to the Saṅgha become the equal partners by losing their previous creed, caste or nationality."[2] The Buddhist Saṅgha from its very inception has maintained this cosmopolitan character. Persons hailing from all the directions and from all grades of society were admitted provided they desire and deserve. This significant feature of the Buddhist Saṅgha is based on the community form of discipline that was followed and practised by all the members of the Saṅgha at every place and at all times. Obviously, the monks hailing from India, Iran, Gandhāra, Greece or from other places all dwelt in Bamiyan, Āhangarāna, as elsewhere, with amity and integrity as one community. They were the real creators of these paintings who decorated the caves. It should be borne in mind that the 'Abodes' (or *Avasas*, which included *Vihāra*, *Aḍḍhayoga*, *Pāsāda*, *Hammiya* and *Guhā*)[3] of the Buddhist monks were exclusively meant for those who were recluses and had joined the Order. No lay -person, as a rule, was allowed to reside there except under some emergent conditions.[4]

It is also interesting to mention here that the monks were allowed by the Buddha to decorate their 'abodes' with paintings. In the *Cullavagga* the Buddha admonishes the monks to keep their vihāra neat and tidy. He also allows to decorate them by themselves or with the help of some persons engaged. Of course these decorations should

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 112; Cf. Rowland B. : *The wall paintings of India, Central Asia and Ceylon*, (1938), also see: Ghirsoman : *MDAFA.*, XIII (1948).
2. *Añguttranikāys (Nalanda)*, Vol.-III, p.-310; *Vinayapiṭaka* (P.T.S.) Vol.-II, p.237.
3. Upasak, C.S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, p. 34, Cf. *Senāsana* and *Senasanavatthu*, *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.
4. Cf. *Bhikkhugatika*, *Ibid.*, p.-173.

never be in the fashion done by ordinary house-holders and no obscene or conjugal scenes should be depicted. They may include such scenes which may tend to inspire spirituality and aversion from the world besides floral and creepery designs.[1] The paintings in the vihāras or other kinds of monk-abodes were usually done by the monks themselves from the very early times. As a matter of fact, the monks proficient in paintings are mostly responsible for these frescoes whether at Bamiyan or at Āhangaran or elsewhere; and that is why variegated art forms and styles occur in them. It is also likely that some artists other than the monks might have been engaged to help them; and in that case, those outsider-artists had to seek admission into the Saṅgha as *Sāmaṇera* (novice), if not as a full-fledged Bhikkhu, so that they could reside with other monks in the residences exclusively meant for the monks.

The Buddhist ecclesiastical society living at Bamiyan or at Āhangaran certainly included monks hailing from different nationalities, some of them from India others from Greece, Iran or from Gandhāra, besides the local monks. It was because of this cosmopolitan feature of the Saṅgha living there that we find the impacts of different kinds of arts. The Indian monks created a piece of art according to their own style, while the Iranian or Greek monks adopted another. No doubt, the local monks formed the largest group and probably developed a 'Local art' of their own, which was tinged with the cosmopolitan atmosphere created by the monks from different countries. The 'Local art', even if it emerged (as some think), got assimilated in the stylistic norms that were followed and practised there. This cosmopolitan feature is to be taken into account when arriving at any conclusion regarding the date of a particular piece of art manifestated there. One other point may also be stressed in this regard. It is a fact that the date of a painting in a cave is later than the date of the construction of the cave. The gap between the actual digging of the cave and plastering or painting or other sorts of embellishments therein may be of years or even of a few centuries. And as such, the caves of Foladi valley might have begun to be constructed quite early, as we have discussed, sometime after the Second Buddhist Council, and the paintings and other decorations might have been completed several centuries after, say by 4th century A.D., as suggested by some scholars.

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1. *Cullavagge* (Nalanda), p. -245.

Cultural Horizons

Kakrak

Kakrak or Kakhrak is a ravine about four kms. south-east of the main cliff of Bamiyan. In this valley there is a series of rock-cut temples and monasteries. A huge statue of the Buddha, measuring 7.4 mtrs. in height, is set into a niche 5.5 mtrs. deep and surrounded by several grottoes and sanctuaries. The figure of the Buddha is badly damaged, both on account of atmospheric effects and also on account of vandalism. The face is almost gone and only traces of the drapery of the *Cīvara* (robe) of the stucco of the Buddha's figure on the shoulders remain. A few other traces of the stucco on the background of the niche can be noticed. The fore-arms of the figure are broken off at the elbow, obviously as a result of the vagaries of anti-Buddhist elements. A narrow culvert, 1.7 mtrs. high, runs behind the Buddha's feet. On the left of the main figure there is a small octagonal cell 2.3 mtrs. in diameter and 2.65 mtrs. high on the inside.[1] The walls were plastered on which the traces of decorations in red, blue, and brown ochres can be seen. The painting of the drums and cupolas was removed and is now divided between the Muse de Guimet (Paris) and National Museum, Dar-ul-Aman (Kabul).[2] It is in the form of a *Maṇḍala* as seen at the centres of esoteric Buddhism in Tibet, Nepal and other places.[3] The figure of the Buddha in the centre, in the *Dharmacakra Mudrā*, is surrounded by a galaxy of 13 smaller Dhyānī Buddhas in the circle tangent to the inner enclosure. Some think that the central Buddha is Vairocana (and others as Bodhisattva), and so they regard it as the earliest representation of the Mahāyāna Buddhist concept of one of the celestial Buddhas, surrounded by magic emanation as can be noticed in Vajrayāna sect in Tibet and Nepal.[4] Some scholars are of the opinion that Vajrayāna originated in the Gandhāra region as early as 600 A.D. and thus, this kind of *Maṇḍala* from Kakrak may suggest a later monastic establishment which may only be after 7th century A.D. or so. The art manifested there, such as draperies on the figures, mask-like faces and bulky proportions of the bodies, also tend to suggest the vestiges of the last phase of Buddhist art in India.[5] There is a figure of a donor wearing like a diadem with triple crescent, usually known as 'Hunter King'. The diadem of the figure resembles to the crowns seen on

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1. Andrea Bruno, *East and West* (N.S.), Vol.-XIII (1962), p.-106.
2. Benjamin Rowland, *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2, p.-42.
3. For Mandala, see: Tucci C. : *The Theory and Practice of the Maṇḍala.*
4. Benjamin Rowland : *Ancient Art From Afghanistan*, p.-98; Cf. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia* published by E.J. Brill (1976), pt.-II, p.-43.
5. *Ibid.* p. 43.

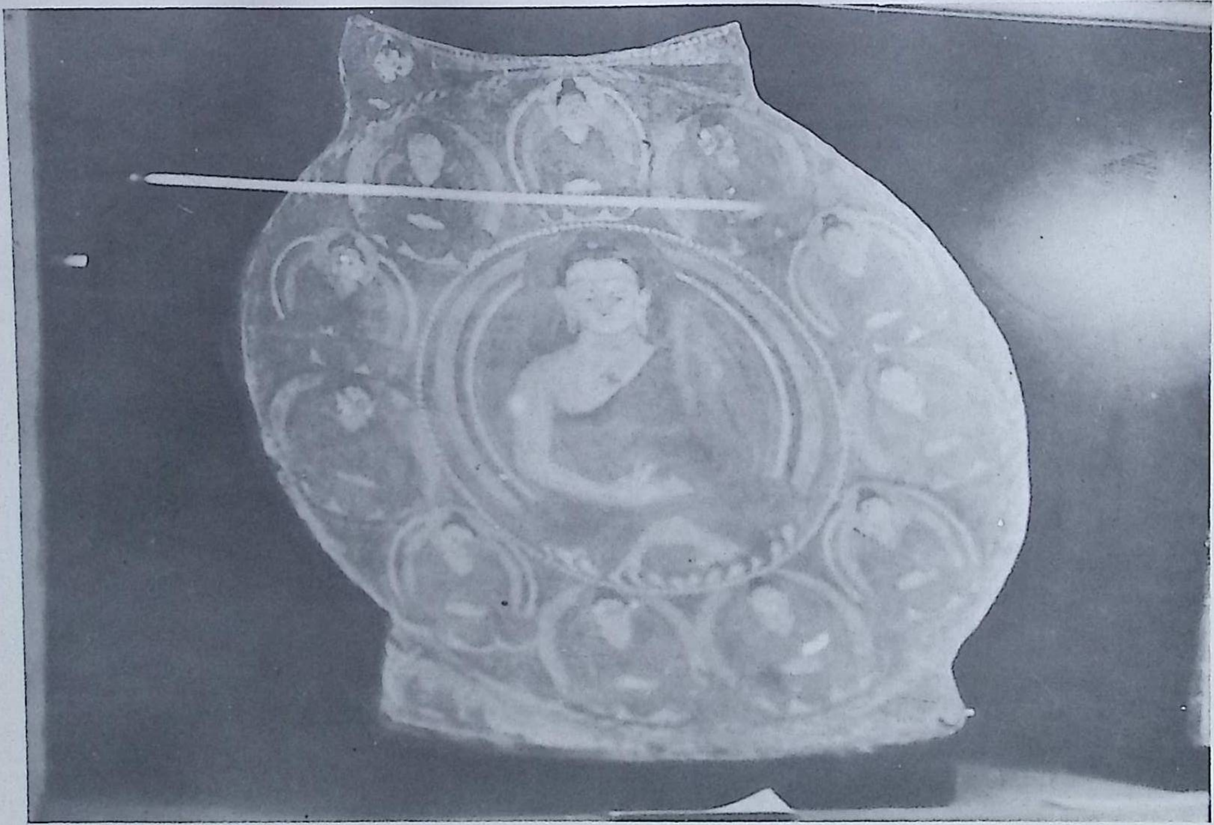

Figure 30 *Bamiyan: Kakrak:*
Mandala painting (11th cent. A.D.) (Kabul Museum).

the coins of Hephthalite rulers of 5th and 6th century A.D., which again suggests a later date of the Kakrak Buddhist Complex.[1]

Kakrak, as we have seen earlier, was probably the only centre of Mahāyāna school of Buddhism in this region. Perhaps following the Lokuttaravādins of Koh-i-Baba cliff, who are supposed to be the creators of the two colossi of the Buddha, the resident monks of Kakrak valley attempted to carve out another colossus figure of the Buddha, of course, not so magnificent as those of Koh-i-Baba. They also decorated the walls with paintings and modelled on a different ideology of the Dhyānī Buddhas. That Kakrak complex is of a later date is also supported by the fact that neither Fa-hsien nor Hiuen-tsiang speak anything about any centre of Mahāyāna school of Buddhism at Bamiyan, presumably because it had yet to be established. It is only the Korean monk Hui-cha'o, who visited Bamiyan in 727 A.D., mentions about the monks and monasteries belonging to Mahāyāna school flourishing along with the Hīnayāna school. He says that the monasteries were populated with monks of both the schools. He probably refers to the monastery of Kakrak which had developed as a Mahāyāna centre by his time; and that also affirms a later date of the Kakrak valley complex. Which school of Mahāyāna Buddhism was prevailing at this centre is difficult to discern. But the *Maṇḍala* form of paintings as similar to the theocratic art of Tibet and Nepal and also considering the colossus image of the Buddha as that of Vairocana, one of the five Buddhas, tends to indicate a later form of Mahāyāna school at Kakrak, which ultimately transformed into Vajrayāna.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS: A BRIEF SURVEY

Koh-i-Baba Caves

Bamiyan caves or grottoes are carved out in the cliff of the hill now called Koh-i-Baba, meaning 'saint hill', which runs about two and a half kilometres in length. The caves look like a honey-comb from a distance, and they number some twenty thousand although they have never been accurately counted.[2] Amid this vast number of honey-combed caves there stand two colossal images of the Buddha hewn out of the rock in niches, one being 35 mtrs. (135 ft.) at its east end and the other 55 mtrs. (176 ft.) in height at west end. Following the cliff towards the west one can see three rounded large niches, each with its own series of grottoes, which once were adorned with the large seated Buddha

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1. *Ibid.* p. 44.
2. Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kasmir Smast,* Kyoto (1962), p.-93.

statues, now no more. Faded paintings can still be seen on the summits of these vaults but at present there is no access to reach them.[1]

Bamiyan is perhaps the only centre of Buddhists where the largest number of caves are dug as the 'abodes' of the monks. From the very ancient days caves were one of the favourite 'abodes' *(Avāsas)* of the Buddhist monks as best suited for seclusion, fit-for meditation. In mountainous regions caves *(Guhā)* and huts *(Kuṭi)* were most common residences of the recluses. At Bamiyan we do not find any other kind of 'abode' *(Āvāsa)* except the caves, the others being vihāra, *Aḍḍha-yoga, Pāsāda* and *Hammiya.* Some think that when Buddhism first entered in the valley of Bamiyan, the religious centre was situated on the plain in front of the cliff, as the remains of a large stūpa to the east of the Small Buddha can still be seen.[2] It may be possible as since the cave construction must have taken sufficient time and labour; and so it appears feasible that in the beginning some sort of establishment like a *Kuṭī* (hut) or mud-built vihāra might have come up on the plain in front of the Small Buddha, although no traces of them are now available.

We have earlier discussed that perhaps the Lokuttaravadin group of the Buddhist monks were the first to come to this place; and they made it their great stronghold where they flourished for several centuries. As such, the two colossi and the vast network of honey-combed caves, which included the large *Uposathāgāra* halls, small and big living cells, domed or lantern-roofed decorated shrines etc. are the creations of this group of the Buddhism. The caves vary in shapes and measurements, usually the caves measure 5 to 6 meters across; some are rectangular while others are octagonal or round in shape. The rectangular caves are vaulted but the square ones are domed or corbelled. Usually each group of the series of caves (or *Āvāsa)* consists of a shrine cave with the images of the Buddha and other deities, the big caves meant for assembly halls or dormitories and a few small caves meant for individual dwellings. Some of the big halls have elevated platforms at the end, which were used as pulpit for the preacher or head priest on the *Uposatha* days or on such other ecclesiastical functions. It is also remarkable to observe that the number of individual living cells is far less than the big caves used as congregational halls or shrines. It is also conspicuous to find there that most of the living cells possess a small ante-room, sufficient only for sitting or half reclining but not sufficient for sleeping. The ante-room

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1. Mizuno. S. : *Haibak and Kasmir Smast*, Kyoto (1962), p.93.
2. *Ibid.* p. 94.

was probably used for meditational practices or used when very cold outside, as they being small were less cold inside. The fewer number of small cells in comparison to the bigger ones indicates that Bamiyan, for being very cold in winter, was not inhabited by the monks throughout the year. Monks from different parts of the country as well as from foreign lands used to assemble there by the approach of the summer and after spending their *'Vassāvāsa'* (Rainy Season Resort) they used to move away to other places at its termination on the full-,moon day of Kattika (October) after *Pavāranā* ceremony. Both Fa-hsien and Hiuen-tsiang probably spent their *Vassāvāsa* at Bamiyan, since both of them relate the Pavarana congregation of the monks. Hiuen-tsiang calls it '*Pañca parisad*' i.e. an assembly constituted of 'five groups', *viz.* Bhikkhu, Bhikkhuni, Sāmaṇera, Sāmaṇeri and Upāsaka. The king of Bamiyan who was probably a Śākya also attended this religious function as a devout Buddhist lay-devotee.

It appears that the monks after the *Pavāraṇā* used to move towards the east and many used to occupy their residences in Uḍyāna (Jalalabad area), as it is milder during winter, and some even went on for a long journey to India on pilgrimage. One can notice innumerable caves on the hills in this area on the eastern bank of the Kabul river, near Baswal. These caves were probably constructed to accommodate the hordes of monks who came there after spending the summer and the rains at Bamiyan. Probably only a few remained at Bamiyan during the winter season as the keepers of the cave dwellings of the place. The small living cells with an ante-chamber were probably meant for these monks. Thus, the caves of Bamiyan were used as 'semi-residence' or temporary residence of the Buddhist monks. The big halls and the chambers served as dormitories which accommodated many monks. Some of these halls, no doubt, were meant for congregational purposes, for *Uposatha* or other ecclesiastical meetings.

In the Pali Vinaya texts, a special type of architecture called *Jantāghara* is mentioned. This was erected in a monastic establishment as approved by the Buddha for the use of monks. The *Jantaghara* was a kind of fire place meant for treating the gout, etc.. It is also mentioned that they were very useful when it snowed (*Himapata Samaye*). We have found a number of ovens in Nalanda ruins.[1] Bamiyan being a cold place where snow-fall is common during winter should have had some such structures. In some big halls we have noticed some big oven-type holes dug into the ground. Perhaps they were meant for the *Jantāgharas*.

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[1] Cf. Upasak C.S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 98-99.

The grottoes or caves are usually arranged in a series of communicating units or groups; each of which consists of several rooms, one or two vestibules, an assembly hall, a shrine-room meant for worship, and one or many monastic cells to accommodate the monks in attendance.[1] This feature of an *Āvāsa* or 'group-residence' of the monks is more conspicous in the eastern side where the Small Buddha stands. Hiuen-tsiang confirms it when he says that this vast monastic complex is divided into ten convents or *Āvāsas* , centred around the two Big Buddhas where one thousand monks, all belonging to Hinayana school (i.e. Lokuttaravādins) dwell. Although these grottoes are dug in a haphazard way, specific monastic complexes can only be discerned near these two colossi. The grottoes are sometimes of two to three storeys and are linked by passages or staircases.

Lantern Roof

Some of the grottoes have the typically designed roofs usually known as 'lantern roof', which is an imitation of the wooden ceiling, where beams are laid diagonally across the corners of a square and the process is repeated in successive tiers so that a small opening remains at the summit of this arrangement in diminishing squares. Benjamin Rowland thinks that this style was invented somewhere on the plateau and then introduced into western Asia and Turkistan.[2] Some regard it as indigenous to Bamiyan and also as the most important contribution to the world of art, which later was copied extensively by the builders of rock caves throughout Central Asia and northern China.[3]

Small Buddha or 35 Metre Buddha

One of the two colossal images of the Buddha that stands in a niche carved out of conglomerate rock at the eastern end measures 35 meters or 135 feet in height. Hiuen-tsiang has given a description of it and calls it 'Sākyamuni' or 'Sākya Buddha'; which he took to be made of metallic stone, in height 100 ft., the pieces of which had been cast separately and then welded together into one figure.[4] He obviously was much impressed by its brilliant colour and took it as if it were made of metal. probably at the time of his visit it was entirely covered with

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p. 29.

[2] Rowland, Benjamin : *Ancient Art of Afghanistan*, p.-95; *The Art and Architector of India , Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*; p.-90.

[3] Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-32.

[4] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53; *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-III, p.-51; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang*, p.-118.

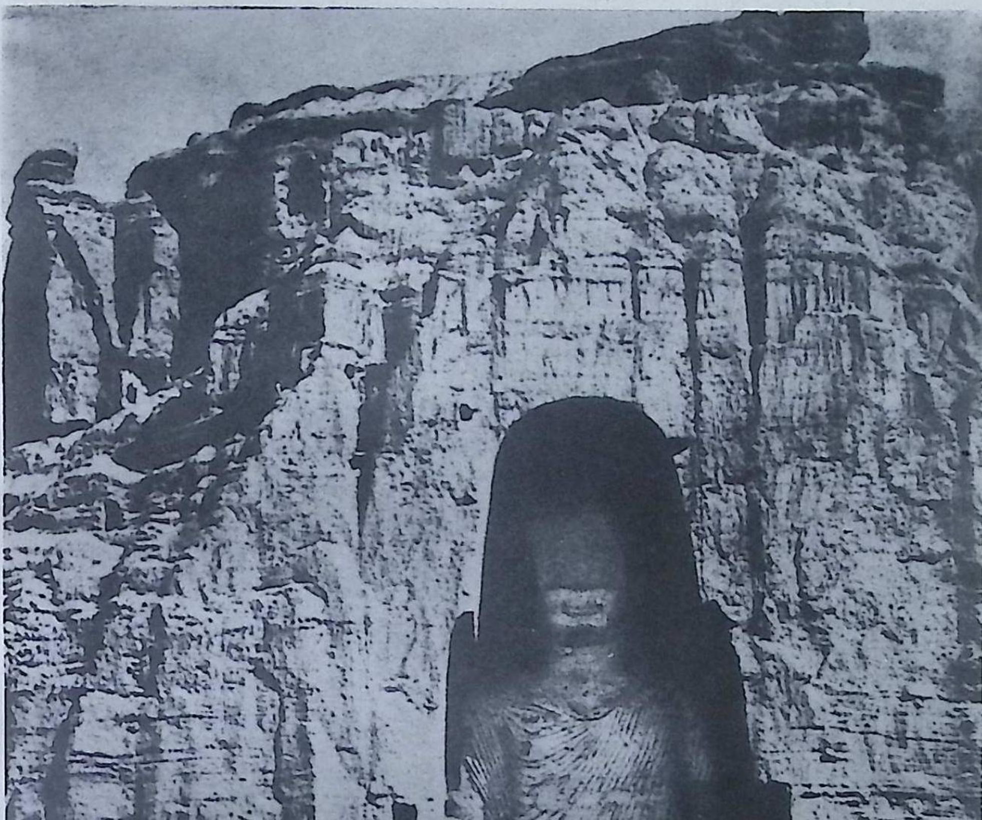

Figure 31 *Bamiyan:*
Small Buddha.

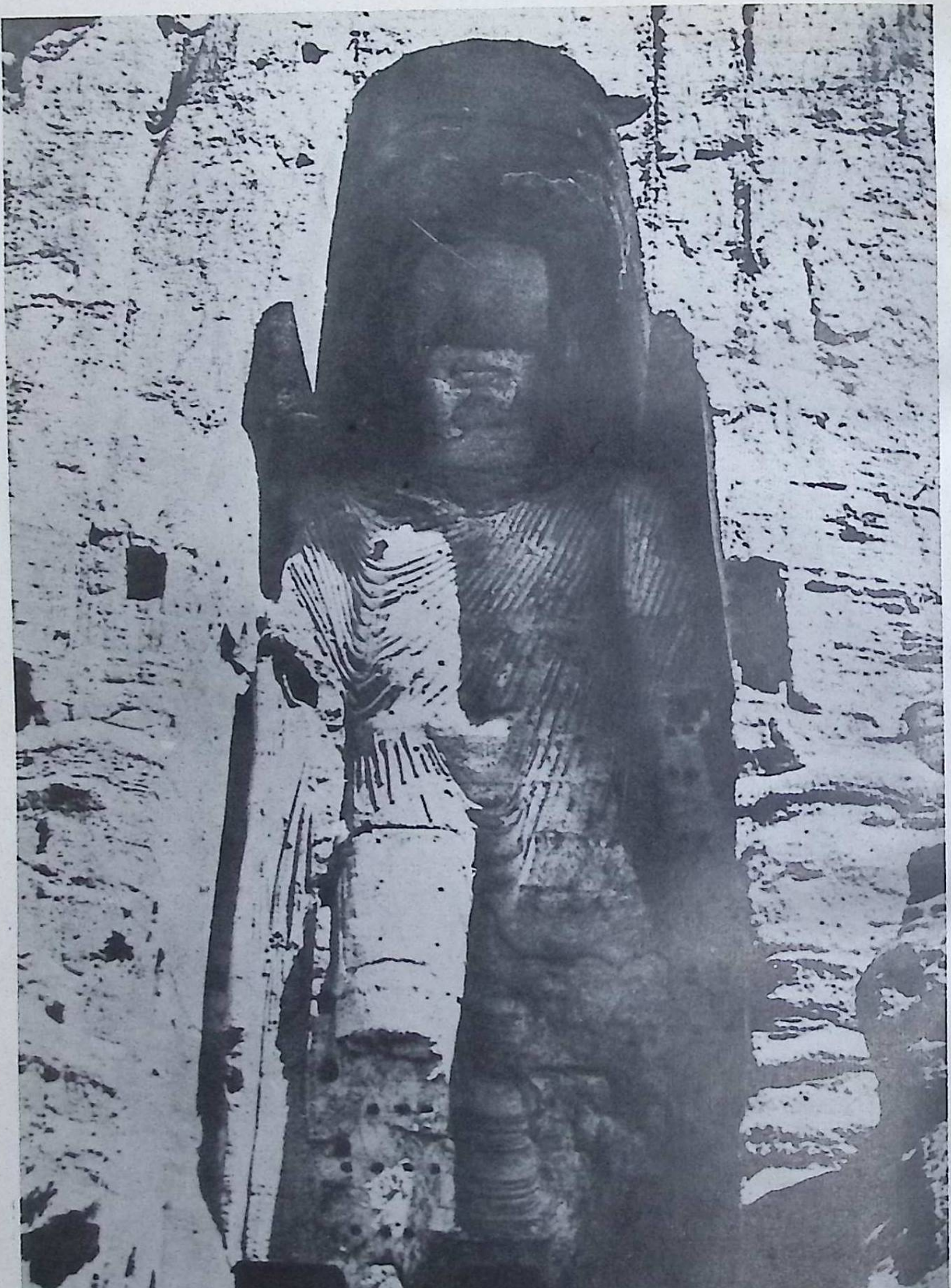

Figure 32 *Bamiyan:*
Big Buddha.

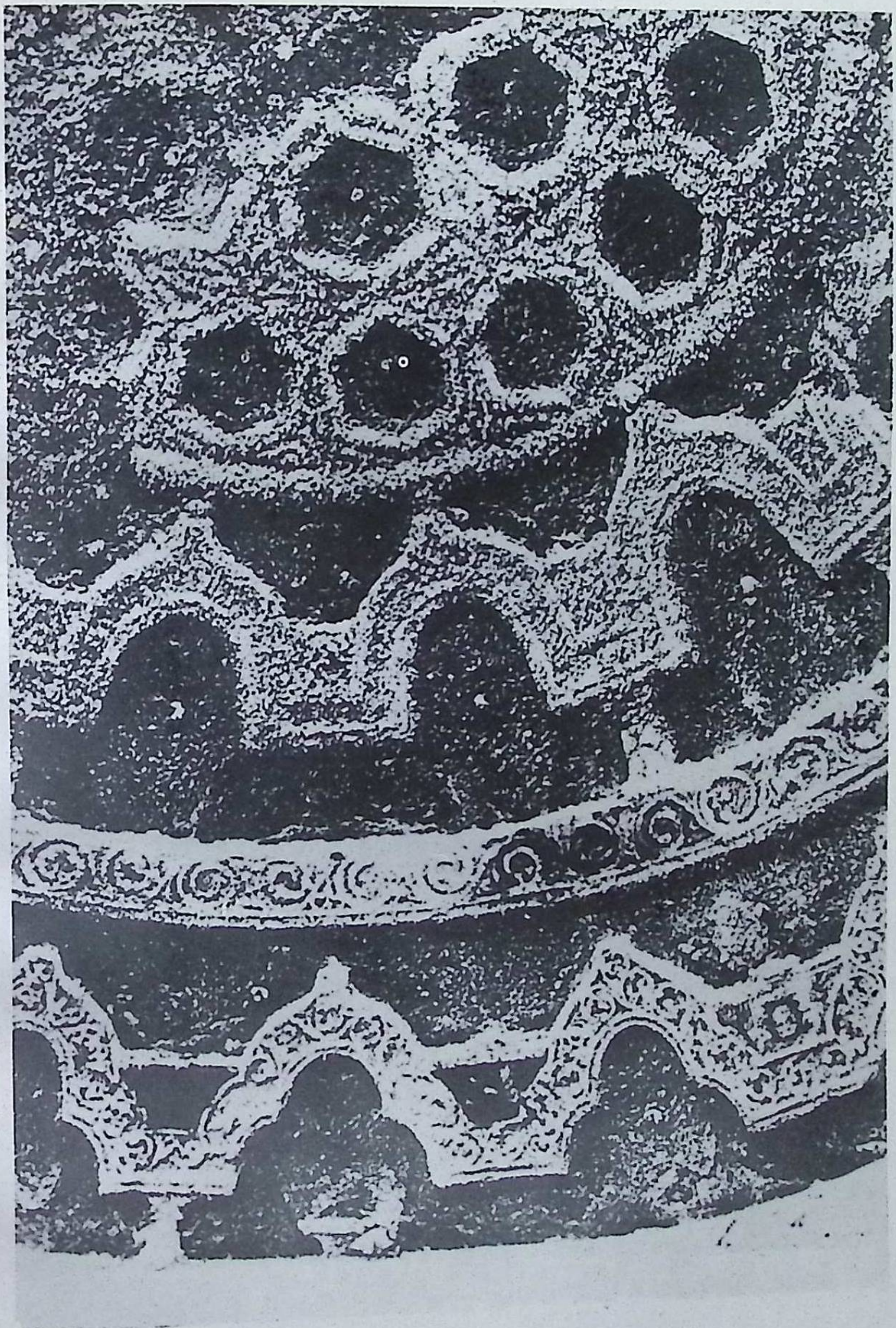

Figure 33 *Bamiyan:*
Decorated dome of a shrine (Big Buddha).

gold-leaf or any other resplendent metal or was painted in a colour giving a metallic look. He certainly mistook its form and decoration.

It is interesting to note that Hiuen-tsiang calls the Small Buddha the figure of 'Sākya'[1] or 'Śākya Buddha'[2] or the image of 'Śākyamuni Buddha', while for the Big Buddha, he calls it 'a stone figure of Buddha'[3] or the 'image of the Buddha of stone'.[4] He thus makes a distinction between the two by calling them differently. It may be mentioned here that in a later Tantric text, in the *Dharmakośa Saṅgraha*, a description of the Śākyasiṅha Buddha occurs. There he is said to have a single face, two hands and of golden colour. His right hand is in the *Bhūmisparśmudrā*, and in the left hand he holds the bowl *(Piṇḍapātra)*. [5] By this description of Śākyasiṅha Buddha we may presume that the Small Buddha was painted with golden colour and that he had held the bowl in one hand (probably in his right hand, as may be noticed at several places, e.g. in the Nalanda Stuccoes) and in the other hand he held the corners of the robe. Hiuen-tsiang was probably conversant with this traditional iconographic style of the Dhyānī Buddha and so he calls the Small Buddha 'Sākyamuni'. It is indeed remarkable to find that such stylistic distinctions were known to the people of Bamiyan.

After carving out the image from the cliff, the folds of the robe, the draperies and other fillings were modelled with mud-mixed chopped straw and over which a final coating of lime plaster. It was afterwards painted; the traces of blue paint are still visible at some places of the body. The Buddha stands probably in walking pose with a bowl in one hand and the robe's corner in the other, although the hands are missing and the face is badly mutilated. The body of the Buddha was fully covered with the monastic robe in *Pāruppana* style (i.e. full covering of both shoulders and hands), [6] as is evident from the drapery of the robe. The stylistic art of the image may be associated with the Gandhāra art, prevalent at Hadda and other places, as is evident by the

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1. *Ibid* .
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.I, p.31.
3. Watters, T. : *Op.cit.*, p.-118.
4. *Ibid.*, p.-118.
5. Cf. Bhattacharya D.C. : *Tantric Buddhist Iconographic Sources*, p.-17. He quotes from the *Dharmakośa Saṅgraha* thus: *Ṣākyasiṅha ekasya svarṇavarṇa dvibhuja dakṣniṇe bhūmisparśa vāme piṇḍapātram cīvaranivāsi vajrāsanam.*
6. The other style of putting the robe is known as *Ekaṃsika* in which only the left shoulder is covered and the right is left free. As a matter of fact both the styles were prevalent in India simply because of the cold and hot seasons. When it is cold, *Paruppana* style is most comfortable for covering the body; and when hot, *Ekaṃsika* is desirable. Bamiyan being a cold place, *Pāruppana* style should be expected. We can find innumerable images in both the styles in India and elsewhere.

voluminous style of its drapery and proportionate heavy bodily features. It is well-known that this art was mostly popularised during the Kuṣāṇas in about 1st and 2nd century A.D. On the basis of the art style it has been attributed to 2nd or 3rd century A.D.[1] It seems probable that it was carved out even earlier by the Lokuttaravādins who had held Buddha as supra-mundane and also had established their strongholds at Bamiyan quite earlier. Thus, this colossus may be assigned to early 2nd century A.D. or so.

Big Buddha or 186-ft. Buddha

A more harmoniously proportionate huge standing statue of the Buddha is hewn out of the conglomerate in a trifoil niche at the western end, about a mile away from the Small Buddha. Its height is 55 meters.[2] Its face is completely beaten flat, nose cut and the right hand, once lifted in *Abhayamudrā*, and the left hand hanging by the side are also missing. The draperies of the robe indicate the Buddha in fully covered *Pāruppana* style.

Hiuen-tsiạng calls it 'a statue of Buddha of stone', 140 or 150 ft. high, of brilliant golden colour and resplendent, with ornaments of precious stones.[3] He distinguishes it from the 'Small Buddha' by calling simply 'Buddha', probably because of stylistic iconographical differences. It was also of golden colour like the Small Buddha, but carved out in a different pose, in the *Abhayamudrā*, and so probably he distinguishes them by giving two different names.

The image was carved out roughly at the first and subsequently wooden pegs were fixed (holes of them can still be seen) to hold the robes for modelling the folds of the Buddha's robe; and thereafter covered with a thick coat of mud-mixed chopped straw. Finally it was plastered with a layer of mortar made of limestone and then coloured.[4] Rowland suggests that the modelling was intended to reproduce on an enormous scale a late Gandhāra statue in which the Buddha's robe is reduced to a series of strings clinging to the surface of the body. And so it should be placed in the 5th century A.D., about a hundred years later than the Small Buddha.[1] Some think it to be of the 3rd century A.D.[2] It may, however, be placed in about the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

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[1] Rowland, B. : *The Art and Architecture of India; Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, p.-98; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-27.

[2] Formerly it was measured only 53 mtr., but with the lower portion having been cleared by the Indian archaeologists, it is now found to be 55 mtrs. in height.

[3] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-I, pp.-50-51; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-118.

[4] Rowland, Benjamin : *The Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, p.-98; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-40.

The entire niche of this statue is covered with paintings which are certainly of a later date than the execution of the statue, about which we will discuss later. Around the foot of the statue there are ten grottoes, which are supposed to have been executed in about 7th century A.D.[3] Most of these grottoes near the Big Buddha are painted, but some have no paintings at all. Some are octagonal in form while others are rectangular. They possess beautiful decorations with designs executed in high relief. Trilobed arches with pedestals are adorned with the seated Buddha statues. In order to reach the upper gallery a staircase was constructed all around the statue, but it is now destroyed. One has to take a route on foot up the western side of the statue in order to reach the gallery. It may be pointed out that this staircase also served as the perambulatory path (*Pradakṣiṇāpatha*) for the purpose of paying homage by the devotees to the Buddha, an act of veneration, as to a caitya or stūpa, signifying the *Sarīradhātu* (corporeal-object) of the Buddha. Since the statue is hewn out of a rock in a niche and that also colossul, the staircase is so designed as to pass through the gallery and then to the ground and thereby making a *Pradakṣiṇā* of the Buddha complete.

Lokuttaravādins and the Colossi

The Lokuttaravādins held the Buddha as transcendent and superhuman, far superior to mortals. This belief inspired them to create these huge images of the Buddha. The purpose behind the construction of them was, no doubt, to draw the attention and admiration mingled with reverence and devotion of the masses, and at the same time to make an exposition of the theory as Buddha being 'supramundane in character'. These two gigantic images display the propensity of the belief of the Lokuttaravādins which they upheld. And probably, because of their deep staunch belief and strong conviction they could remain predominant in Bamiyan for several centuries.

In size and dimension the Big Buddha image is unparallel in the world as it is the largest. The grandeur and magnificence can only be assessed by the fact that if we go near the image on a horseback, then we can only touch the toe of the Buddha. Because of its grand colossal size, for centuries, pilgrims, wanderers, merchants, monks, scholars, kings, nobles and the general masses all alike were drawn to this place. Even today these two colossi of Bamiyan have become as a 'synonym of Afghanistan' and have made it world famous.

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[1] Rowland, Benjamin : Op. cit., p.-98; Allchin & Hammond: *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-271. They place it to 5th or 6th cent. A.D. on account of paintings in the niche.

[2] Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-41.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.

'Surkha-But' and 'Khink-But'

In the middle ages the 'Big-Buddha' was known among the people as *'Surkh-But'* or the 'Red-idol' and the 'Small-Buddha' as *'Khink-But'* or 'White or Grey-Idol' probably because of the colour in which they then looked painted.[1] These images have since lost their original colours and decorations on account of being deserted. The word *'but'*, now reduced to mean an idol, is undobtedly a derivative of the word *'Buddha'*. Because of the extensive number of the images of Buddha in this country, the term 'Buddha' has since changed into *'But'*, meaning 'idol'.

Azdaha

Hiuen-tsiang gives an interesting account of an image of the Buddha in Mahāparinibbāna pose, which, according to him, was about 1000 feet long. This was located at a distance of about 12 or 13 *li* (or 2 or 3 *li)* to the east of the city. He also mentions the function of *Wu-Cha* or *Mokṣa* being held there which was attended by the king of the country. It was a great congregation in which the king gave all his possessions to the monks. He says, "Here is a Saṅghārāma in which this image of the Buddha in reclining posture is erected. The image is in excellent condition."[2] It appears that the Saṅghārāma was of some importance where the king of the country used to visit on special occasions. The *Moksa* or *Wu-Cha* ceremony that Hiuen-tsiang witnessed is, no doubt, the *Prātimokṣa's* recitation ceremony held after the *Vassāvāsa* (Rainy-season Resort) on the full-moon day of the Kartika month, which is usually known as *Pavāraṇā* ceremony and as a rule, all the monks of one ecclesiastical *Sima* (boundary or area) must assemble at a fixed place. Hiuen-tsiang was also present on this occasion probably because he had spent his three months '*Vassāvāsa* there.

This figure of the Buddha in Mahāparinibbāna pose has been identified with the figure which local people call 'Azdaha' or dragon or huge lizard, on the flat summit of a rock, at about the same distance

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1. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, part-II, p.-535.
2. Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 119-120; Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, bk. -II, pp.-51-52; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-53.

as described by Hiuen-tsiang. It bears the resemblance of a lizard, at present runs across.[1] Some suggest that this figure of reclining Buddha was perhaps carved out in the rock, which formed the back wall of the Saṅghārāma.[2] Probably it was also the creation of the Lokuttaravādins since it has also been carved out on a similar gigantic scale as the two colossus Buddhas.

Paintings of Bamiyan

Paintings have been noticed in all the three ancient Buddhist monastic complexes at Bamiyan, *viz.* Koh-i-Baba hill, Deh-i-Ahangaran (Foladi valley) and Kakrak. No doubt these cave-monasteries were once beautifully decorated with paintings. At present only some of them are partly preserved while others have become blurred or destroyed by soot or human vandalism or by natural effects. Some of the caves bear only the traces of paintings. The best preserved and also the most extensive ones are in the main Bamiyan valley of Koh-i-Baba caves where the two colossi stand. At Deh-i-Aharangaran (Foladi valley) only traces of paintings can be noticed while at Kakrak the whole painted plasters are now removed from the site and divided between National Museum, Kabul and Muse-de Guimet, Paris.[3]

The stylistic art compositions are generally divided into three or four categories-Indian including Gandhāran, Sessanian or Iranian and Central Asian.[4] As such, they are hybrid in character and obviously reflect the cosmopolitan form of the society of monks who once dwelt there.

Creators of the Paintings

Prior to discuss the art of these paintings, a probe may be made to ascertain the creators of these paintings. In reference to this it should be borne in mind that all those caves were exclusively meant for the Buddhist monks as their 'abodes' (*Āvāsa*). In the Pali Vinaya texts we referred to earlier five types of 'abodes' or 'lodgings' for the Buddhist as approved by the Buddha. These are : (1)*Vihāra*, (2)*Aḍḍhayoga*, (3)*Pāsāda* (4)*Hammiya* and (5)*Guhā*.[5] *Guhā* or cave was the most common type of 'abode' for the monks dwelling on the hills. In the Vinaya Commentary, the *Samantapasādikā*, however, four types of *Guhās* or caves are mentioned, namely, built of bricks (*Iṭṭhakāmaya*), of wood (*Dārumaya*), of the earth (*Paṃsumaya*) and of stone (*Silāmaya*).[1] No specimens of caves built of brick or wood or earth have since survived. Only the stone caves hewn out of the rocks or partly rock-cut and partly stone-built[2] have been found in India and elsewhere. It is interesting to note that the style of structure of the vihāra-cave-monasteries in India was modelled on imitation of the vihāra-structure on the plains, made of bricks. A vihāra usually possesses a courtyard and varandah all around, behind which rooms or living-cells; just in front of the gate, on the opposite side, a shrine-room with the image of the Buddha or a stūpa. The gate is usually flanked by the images of the Buddha on the either sides. The Ajantā cave monasteries in India are carved out in this very fashion, and may be compared with any ancient vihāra on plains in India. But this pattern has not been followed at Bamiyan, although we find there big caves, used as *Uposathāgaras* or dormitories; shrines with the images of the Buddha or stūpas; the living cells, usually with an ante-room meant for meditation or for living when it was extremely cold. Perhaps no definite plan or pattern in carving out these caves was adopted, they were rather haphazrdly built.

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[1] Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuang Chwang*, p.-12; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, pp. 76-77.

[2] Watters, T. : *Op. cit.*, p.-120.

[3] *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2, p.-42.

[4] *Ibid.*, p.-25; Rowland, Benjamin : *The Art and Architecture of India : Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, p.-100; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, 24; *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, p.-536.

[5] *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda) pp. 55, 100; *Cullavagga* (Nalanda) pp. 68-69, 239.

As in Ajantā so also in Bamiyan, we find, the walls were first chiselled and then plastered with *cunam* and other materials for making the surface smooth to decorate them with paintings. It is worth mentioning here that decorating the Buddhist monasteries with paintings is an ancient tradition. In the *Cullavagga* a story occurs when some unscrupulous monks, called Chavaggiya, are said to have decorated their viharas with male and female figures of human beings in the fashion as found in the houses of ordinary householders, contrary to the monastic precepts and norms. The Buddha, when reported, thereupon laid down a rule prohibiting the monks to decorate their vihāras with such paintings of male and female (conjugal) figures for being perverse or undignified for the monastic life. But, at the same time, the Buddha sanctioned the monks to decorate their vihāras with paintings of other designs like creepers, flowers or *Makaradantaka* (i.e. animal designs etc.) or in *Pañcapaṭika* (in variegated pictures).[3] In

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1. *Samantapasādikā* (Nalanda), Vol.-III, p.-1998.
2. For example the Udayagiri Cave No.-1; Cf. D.R. Patil's article on the 'Monuments of the Udayagiri Hill', *Vikram Volume*, p.-386.
3. *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), p.-245.

the *Samanta-pasādikā*, the Commentary of the *Vinayapiṭaka*, it is further mentioned that the anecdotes of the Jātakas or such scenes exhibiting 'excellent donation' (*asadisadānāni*) or such devotional and inspiring scenes which may arouse renunciation and tedium from the world (*Nibbeda*), may be painted. These may be done by engaging painters from outside. The monks may, however, paint creepers and floral designs.[1] The paintings of the Buddhist monastic dwellings were obviously done mostly by the monks themselves, as we have seen above by the Chavaggiya monks. No doubt it was an ancient tradition among the Buddhist monks. As usual the paintings or other decorations in the vihāras or in other monastic dwellings were related to the theological subjects, which usually included the Jātaka tales or the life-scenes of the Master or the legendary scenes of the celestial beings like *Apsarās* or Devatās and such other items. They naturally demanded a thorough knowledge of the scriptures and traditions besides of course proficiency in the art of painting. No doubt, the Buddhist monks were the best persons so far as the knowledge of the texts or traditions was concerned. It should be borne in mind that while studying the traditional Buddhist art, we are studying the works which are not primarily intended for pure aesthetic enjoyment, rather they comprise the values in forms and expressions for edifying the higher ideal of life leading to final 'emancipation'. The Buddhist monks who had already left their homes and hearths in search of these higher values of life were the main creators of these art pieces, in sculpture or painting.

According to the Buddhist ecclesiastical rule the monastic 'abodes' were exclusively meant for the members of the Order, normally no layman was allowed to stay there. There is a Vinaya rule forbidding a monk to sleep along with a layman under one and the same roof for more than one or two nights and that too only on an emergent occasion; otherwise the monk commits an ecclesiastical offence of *Pācittiya* (Rule No.-35).[2] And as such, if a painter or artist who was engaged to decorate a vihāra, had to dwell outside the vihāra; and in case he had to stay inside the vihāra, he had to undergo the *Pabbajjā* (ordination) temporarily and become a *Sāmaṇera* (novice) or even a Bhikkhu, by getting higher ordination of *Upasampadā*, at least for the period he was engaged in the work of decorations. To stay in the monastery naturally offered them better opportunity to understand the traditions and the texts enabling them to be better conversant with the item that they had to illustrate. Thus, in all probability, the creation of these

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1. *Samantapasadikā* (Nalanda), Vol.-III, p.-1998.
2. *Pācittiyapāli* (Nalanda), P.-30ff.

artefacts was mainly done by the members of the Saṅgha. Paintings in Bamiyan or in Ajantā or elsewhere in the Buddhist dwellings are mainly their products and to be evaluated in this perspective. The cosmopolitan form of the monastic Order should also be borne in mind in this respect, that we have discussed earlier. And only then, we can discern the real contributors of these artefacts.

Bamiyan stood on the ancient 'silk route' and traders, and so saints, invaders and ordinary wanderers all alike passed through this place while travelling from the east or from the west. The exotic scenic beauty of the valley and its secluded atmosphere offered a congenial choice for the monks to put up their 'abodes' at this excellently peaceful place which was quite fit for meditation and for other higher spiritual practices. The Koh-i-Baba hill of Bamiyan was the best and most ideally suited place for cave monasteries, 'being neither very far nor too close' to the residences of the householders.[1] Gradually it rose to a very big centre of the Buddhist mendicants; and in due course the number of the caves increased enormously followed by the excessive influx of the monks, who came here from all parts of the Buddhist world, including India, Central Asia, China, Iran, Greece and Korea. The large extent of the monastic grottoes which number about twenty thousand suggests that Bamiyan, somehow or other, became the most favourite haunt of the Buddhist monks who usually stayed there at least for eight months, except in the winter season which is indeed very hard there. Local monks probably stayed there for the whole year. Because of the two collossi besides living facilities available there, monks were naturally attracted to this place. Fa-hsien and Hiuen-tsiang visited this place from China; Hiu-Cha'o came from Korea. Hiuen-tsiang probably met here with two Indian monks, Āryasena and Āryadāsa. The king, as he records, was probably a descendant of the Śākya exile from India. The monastic establishments of Bamiyan were the residences of a cosmopolitan form of community in its truest sense. The resident monks contributed according to their own different art-skills in decorating the cave monasteries of Bamiyan.

We have mentioned earlier that Bamiyan was a great stronghold of the Lokkuttaravādins from the very beginning who belonged to the Theravāda group of Buddhism and probably they were the main creators of the paintings and sculptures. Contributions of the monks belonging to different schools dwelling there cannot however be entirely ruled out.

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[1] Cf. *Mahavagga* (Nalanda), p.-36; *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), pp. 252-253- *Gāmato neva atidure na ca accāsanne gamanāgamanasampannam, atthikānam atthikānam manussānam abhikkamanīyam divā appākiṇam, rattim appāsaddam, appanigghosam vijanavatam manussārahaseyyakam, paṭisallanasāruppam.* (Neither very far from the village nor too close, easy approach, not crowded in the day and quiet at night, fit for solitude, a lonely place, fit for meditation). Cf. Upasak, C.S.: *D.E.B.M.T.*, p.-206.

The niches in which the two colossi stand and also the soffits of their vaults appear to have been entirely decorated with paintings, which included Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, different deities and other celestial beings, like flying *Apsarās, Devatās, Gandharavas* etc.; traces of them can still be seen. Some of the domes and the 'lantern roofs' were also once elegantly decorated with the representations of many Buddhist deities. The painted caves are more in extant in the 'Small Buddha' complex than those in the 'Big Buddha'.

Paintings of the Small Buddha Complex

Scholars are of the opinion that the paintings decorating the vault above the 'Small Buddha' are entirely Iranian or Sassanian in style and can be compared with the pictorial equivalents of the images in the Sassanian rock-cut reliefs at Naqsh-i-Rustam and Shapur.[1] In the southern corner of the main niche there are winged females wearing Sassanian helmets and carrying spears and shields. They frame the central figure which has been identified with the 'Sun God', who stands in the chariot wearing a long cloak and a long straight sword attached to his belt. The horses are badly damaged, but here and there a hoof can be seen. The wheel of the chariot is also visible in the north-west corner. Some have attempted to trace it as a pictorial version of the relief at Surya of Bodh Gaya,[2] while others have identified it with Candra and Mithra and think that they are clad in the fashion of north India in long-embroidered coat.[3] The representation of the Sūrya God in a Buddhist monastic complex may recall to a figure of Amitābha, another name of the Buddha and also a synonym to Sūrya. Buddha is said to be the descendant of the Okkaka (Sanskrit =Ikṣvāku) family belonging to the Solar race. The figure of the 'Sun God' may be an illustration of this legendary episode.[4] The seated figures on the west wall of the niche look heavy, barrel-chested and round-shouldered, all Sassanian in style. On the eastern wall is a

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1. Rowland, Benjamin : *The Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Jain*, p.-100; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-25; B.B. Lal: Marg, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2(1971), p.-4; *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, p.-536.
2. Rowland, Benjamin: *Op. cit.*, p.-100.
3. *Buddhism in Afghanistan* (Published by E.J. Brill), Part-II, p.-47.
4. *D.P.P.N.*,Vol-I, p.-462; for Amitabha see Edgerton, F. : *Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, Vol.-II, p.-63.

figure of a monk in yellow robe and above it is a man dressed in the Central Asian tunic, wearing a pair of high boots.[1]

When we move in the grottoes of this complex, we notice that most of these cave paintings are still extant here. These grottoes are arranged in a series of communicating units, each of which consists of several rooms, one or two vestibules, an assembly hall (*Uposathāgāra* or *Upaṭṭhānasālā* or Guest-room), a sanctuary and one or more monastic living cells for the monks in attendance. The sanctuaries are usually decorated with the statues of the seated Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and the donors. The paintings of these grottoes are mostly blurred with soot or have weathered away. In one of the grottoes (Group-G) the ceilings and the stūpa in the centre of the room were covered with paintings having very early Hellenistic influence (none of the Indian or Sassanian in character). At present nothing remains there as most of the paintings disappeared two hours after they were cleaned.[2] In Group-C, the Assembly Hall (*Uposathāgāra*) is elaborately decorated with the floral and creepery designs in different colours, which suggest Sassanian influence.[3] The winged and beribboned ribbed vases on the ogees of the arcade are also in Sassanian style. Similarly, a series of Buddhas walking between beribboned columns resting on bulbous jar-like lotus pads also suggest Sassanian influence. In group-D, also the representation of a wild boar, buds with strings of pearls exhibit Sassanian art motifs. But the Group-I which possesses the niches of seated Buddhas are decorated with some of the most beautiful paintings depicting seated Buddhas in the centre and bordered by female dancers, *Apsarās* and musicians, *Gandharvas*, all suggesting Indian influence. A figure of Bodhisattva holding a blue lotus reminds us of the famous Boddhisattva of Ajanta (Cave No.-1), a clear influence of Indian art.[4] A contour of the art trends manifested at the Small Buddha Complex tends to infer that the paintings there are neither purely Iranian or Sassanian nor Central Asian, Greek, or Indian. All these arts have figured in their own fashion but Sassanian art appears to have occupied a major portion. No doubt, the persons who were engaged in these embellishments included the artists or monk-artists from different countries mostly from Iran as also from India, Central Asia and Greece. The mixed form of art of Bamiyan again

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1. Dupree, N.H. L: *The Valley of Bamiyan*, pp. 34-35.
2. *Ibid.*, p.-30.
3. *Ibid.*, p.-36.
4. *Ibid.* : p.-40.

indicates the cosmopolitan nature of the monastic community that was dwelling there.

Date of Paintings of 'Small Buddha'

The paintings on the walls of 'Small Buddha' are certainly of a later date than the image itself which may be of about the 3rd or the 4th century A.D. The stylistic peculiarities of art, when compared with the Sassanian art, tend to point to a later date. On the ceilings there were a series of medallions or roundels in the tradition of Sassanian textile designs, containing winged horses, heads of boars and dove-like birds, very popular with the kings of Iran. A boar's head had become a heraldic symbol of royal family during the time of Khosru-II in early VII century A.D. The paintings of Bamiyan cannot be dated earlier than 6th or early 7th century A.D.[1] Rowland is of the opinion that these paintings are of a later date than Ajantā and cannot be placed before the 5th century A.D. or even later.[2]

Paintings of Big Buddha

The 'Big Buddha' or 55 mtr. Buddha is of rather a later date than the 'Small Buddha'; and the niche, in which this statue stands, was once entirely covered with paintings, traces of which can still be seen. The side walls of the niche were also decorated with paintings which included the figures of the Seated Buddhas arranged row upon row in different *mudrās* and above them flying celestial divinities like *Apasarās, Devatās, Gandharvas* etc. besides the embellishments of floral and creepery designs. From the artistic point of view the jewelled head-dresses, striped skirts, depictions of body forms like noses, cheeks, hips and legs bear a close resemblance to the Ajanta frescoes, though not so elegantly. The art style, though much influenced by the Indian art, cannot be described as purely Indian on account of some other details there; for instance, the foliage motifs of the Boddhisattva's throne, which appear to belong to Gandhāra origin,[3] the flying ribbons of the head-dresses are definitely Sassanian. The drapery of the figures, flying scarves and some other forms resemble to the paintings of Kizil and other sites in Turkistan and they may be described as Central Asian.[4] On account of different art peculiarities exhibited in these paintings some scholars have suggested that some sort of local art style developed at Bamiyan which was an admixture of the elements drawn from different canons of art, both western and Indian.[1] Some have given its name as 'Kushanao-Sassanian' art.[2] The colour scheme, as rightly suggested by Rowland, is dominated by Lapis Lazuli blue which can be seen on the robes and in the background. The Lapis Lazuli is commonly found in the mines of Badakshan in Afghanistan.[3] We have pointed out earlier that, as a matter of fact, a cosmopolitan form of monastic community was dwelling in Bamiyan; and we are, therefore, inclined to believe that this admixture art is the creation of different monk-artists hailing from different countries, besides the local artists. Obviously the predominant use of blue colour of the Lapis Lazuli was due to its abundant availability in Afghanistan. Verily, this mixed art cannot be regarded as 'local art' or 'Kushano-Sassanian' rather it is a product of those monk-artists who had proficiency in different individual art-styles of the countries of their origin. The mixed stylistic tendencies as manifested there clearly suggest the impact of the monastic contributions made by the monks hailing from many countries.

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[1] Dupree N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-37.
[2] Rowland, Benjamin : *The Wall paintings of India, Central Asia and Ceylon*, p.-62.
[3] Rowland Benjamin : *Ancient Art of Afghanistan*, p.-23.
[4] Rowland, Benjamin : *The Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia and Ceylon*, p.-102; Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-45.

Date of Painting of 'Big Buddha'

As a matter of fact, the wall paintings are definitely anterior to the image of the 'Big Buddha' as it was created much before. The paintings also do not belong to an identical school of art. The scheme of art manifestations show a dependence on Indian art that developed in the 5th century A.D. or even later. We may thus come to a nearer date and the paintings may be dated to the 6th or early 7th century A.D.[4]

Destruction of Bamiyan

In spite of the fact that the tribe known as Hepthalites or Hūnas poured into Gandhāra from the deserts of Central Asia in c. 425 A.D., who also penetrated into the east destroying many monasteries Peshawar and other places, and were checked by the Gupta kings from entering into the Gangetic valley. Bamiyan somehow or other escaped their fury and no damage was then done to this great Buddhist monastic establishment. It is also possible that because of the confederacy of the Sassanians and Turks, their advance in the west was almost halted.[5] Hiuen-tsiang, the Chinese traveller, who visited

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[1] Rowland, B. : *Marg*, Vol. -XXIV, No.-2, (1971), p.-27.
[2] Dupree, N. H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-45.
[3] Rowland, B. : *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2 (1971), p.-27.
[4] Rowland, Benjamin : *The Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia and Ceylon*, p.-68.
[5] *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2 (1971), p.-7.

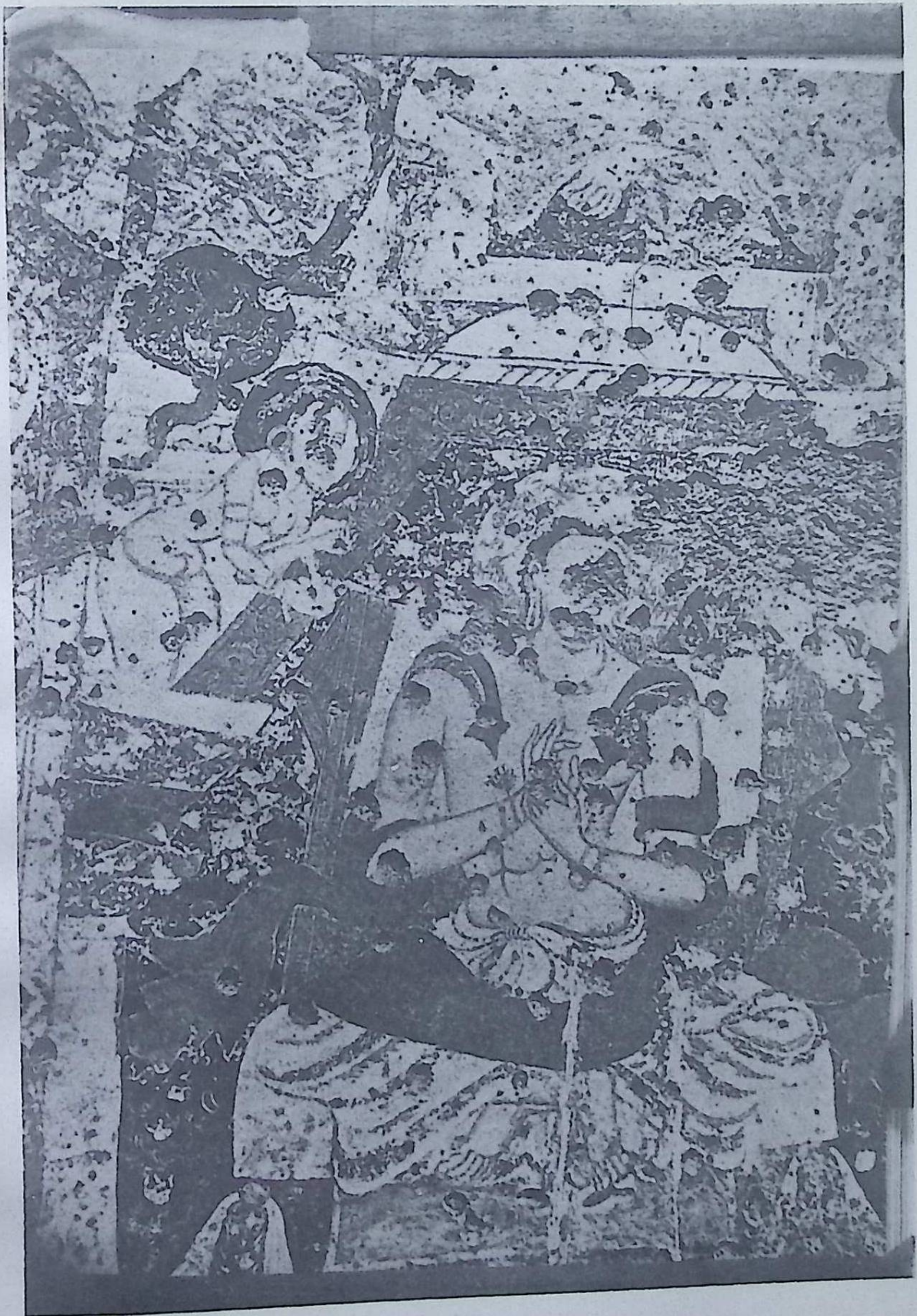

Figure 34 *Bamiyan:*
Wall painting in the niche of Big Buddha.

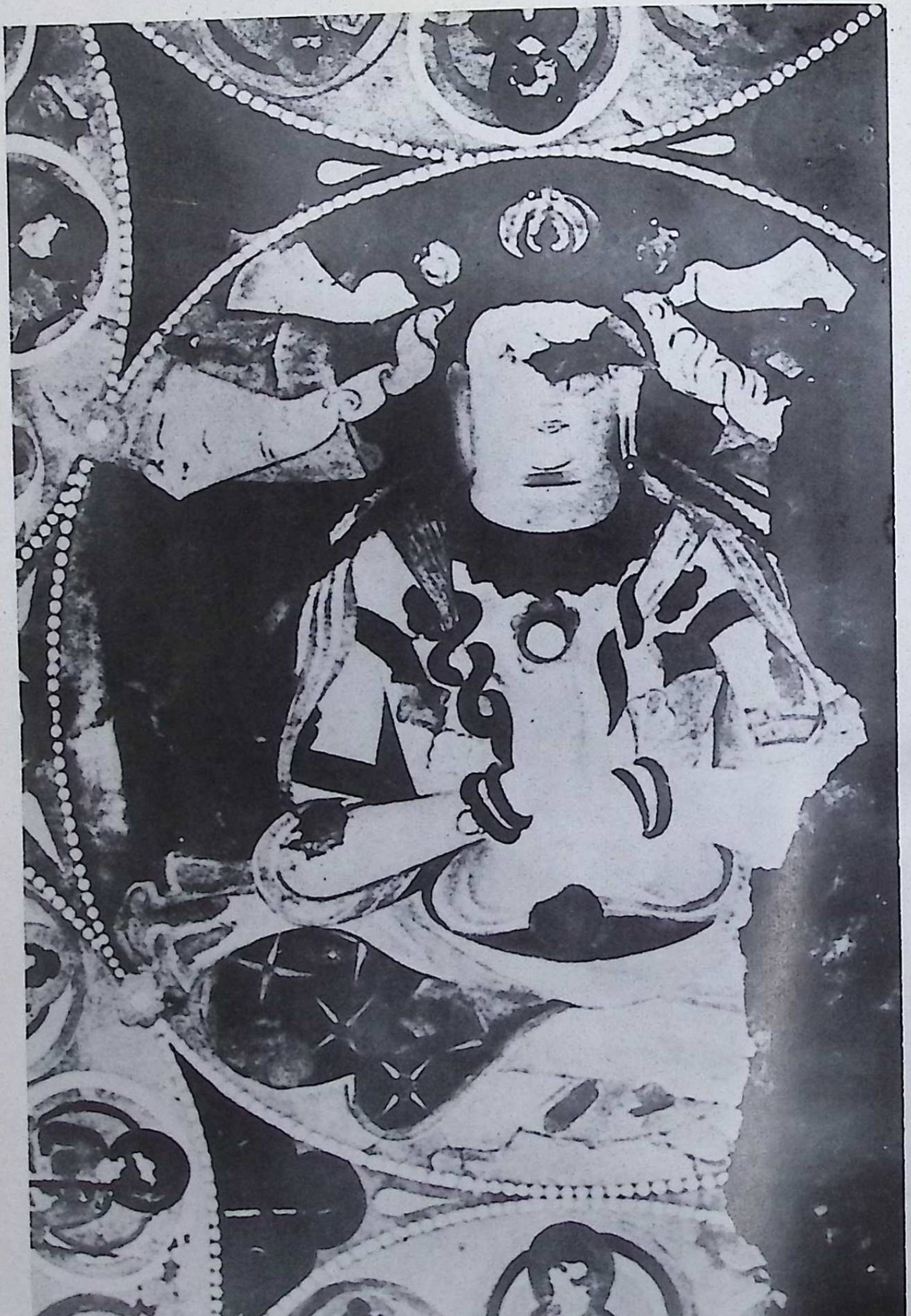

Figure 35 *Bamiyan:*
Wall painting in the niche of Big Buddha.

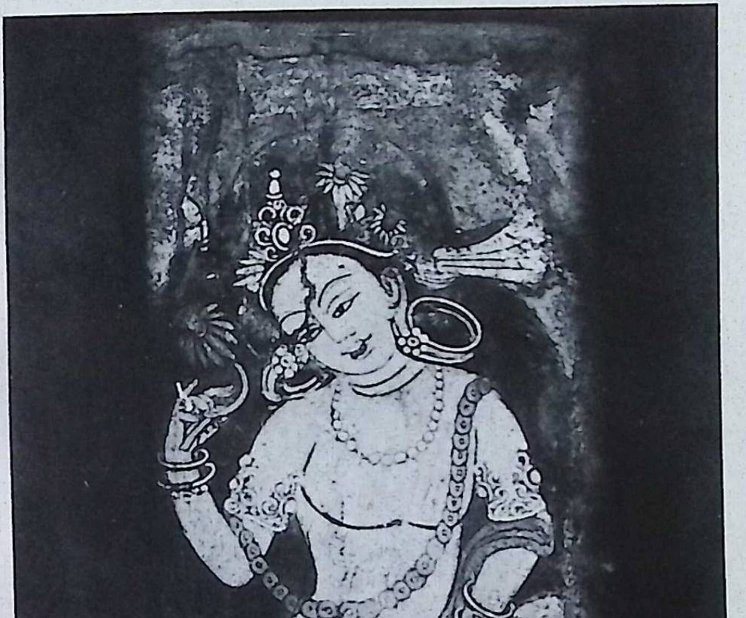

Figure 36 *Bamiyan:*
Bodhisattva-wall-painting in the niche of Big Buddha.

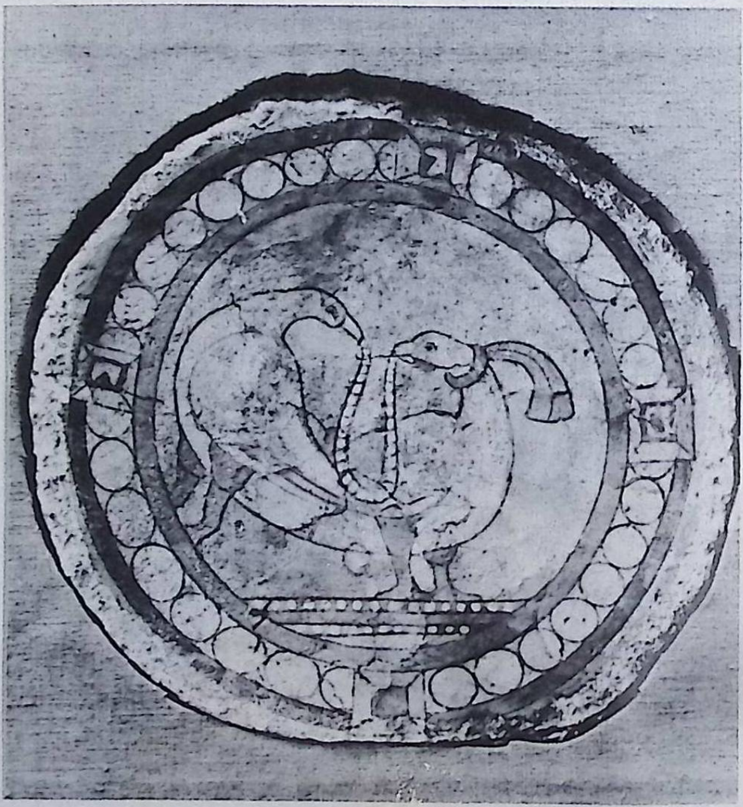

Figure 37 *Bamiyan:*
Two geeze with garland in beaks (Iranian style) wall painting in the niche of Big Buddha.

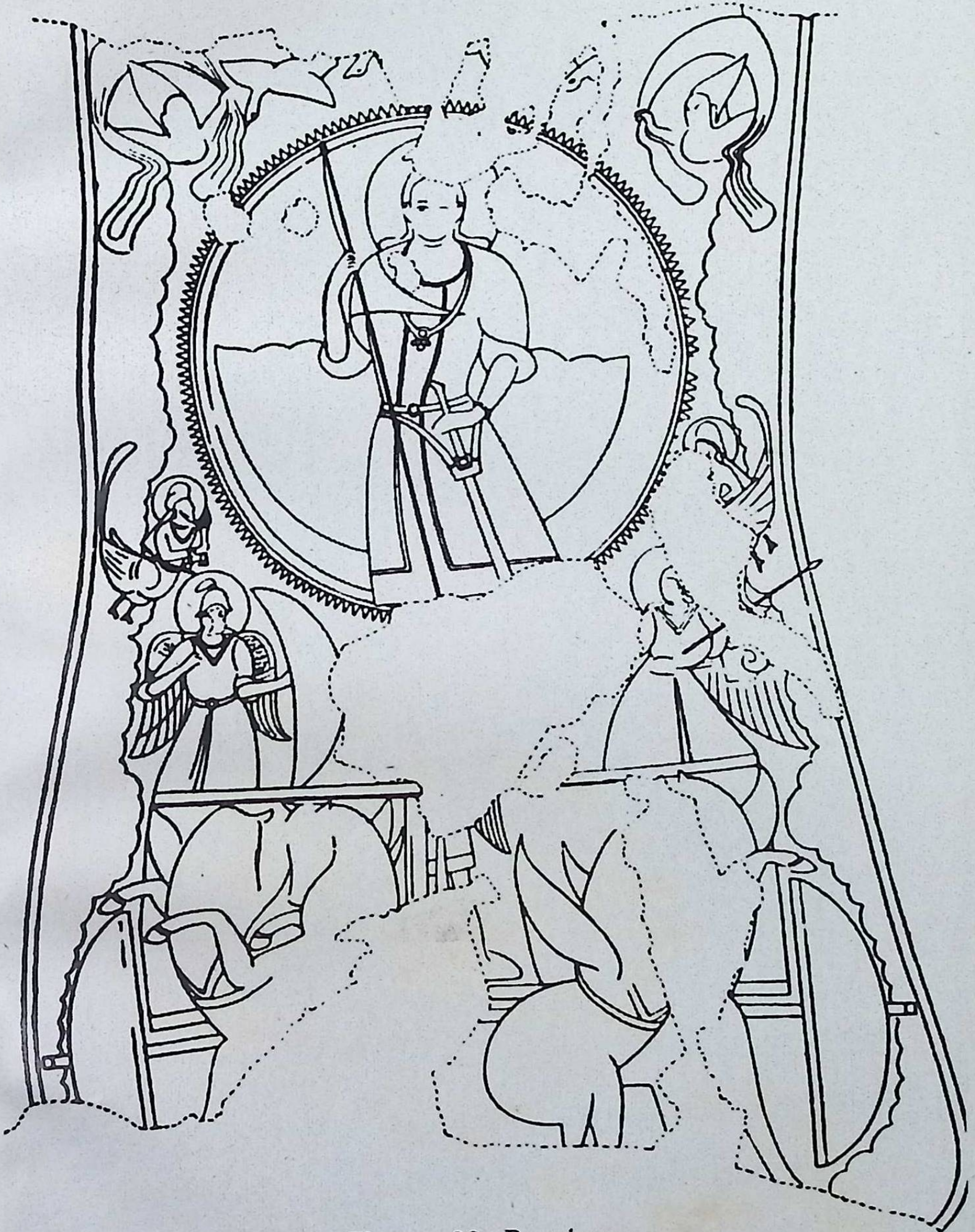

Figure 38 *Bamiyan:*
Divinity.

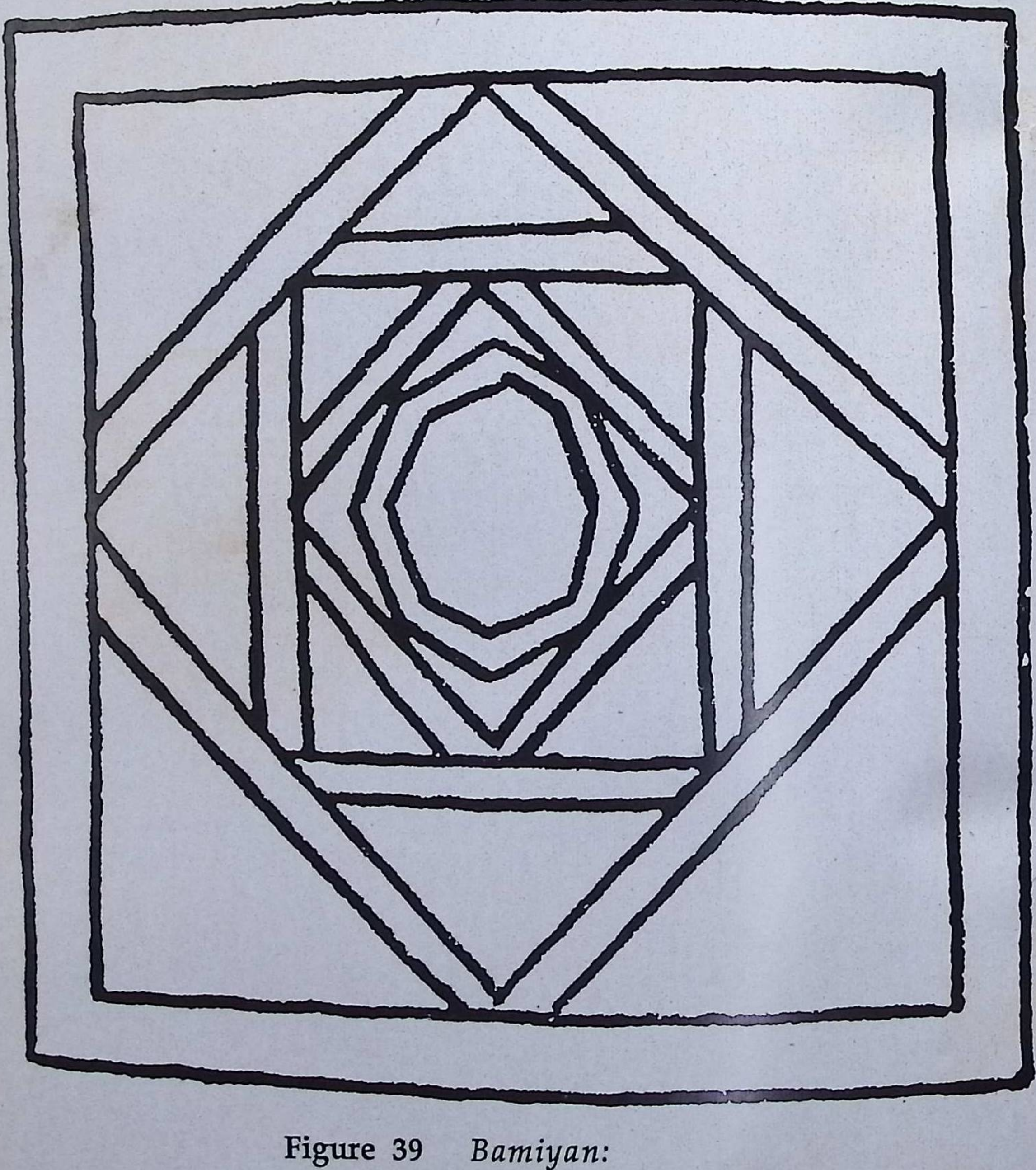

Figure 39 *Bamiyan:* Lantern-roof design.

Bamiyan in about 630 A.D. found this place in a flourishing state. He noticed there some tens of Convents and over a thousand monks dwelling there. He also noticed the people following the Religion zealously and the king also took active part in religious functions. Although in 642 the Sassanians were defeated by the Arabs, who also conquered Kandahar in 699-700 A.D. and defeated the Later Kuṣāṇa Rājā of Kabul, this time, too, the small kingdom of Bamiyan and its great Buddhist establishments seem to have remained unaffected and intact for another century.[1] The Korean monk, Hui-Cha'o, who visited Bamiyan in 727 A.D., presents an eye-witness account of the flourishing condition of the place as a Buddhist centre. He also found the people as well as the king and the nobles devoted to 'Three Jewels' of Buddhism. Monasteries and monks were in abundance who practised both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna.[2] Probably he also visited the Kakrak valley complex, from where the Mandala form of paintings have been recovered, and which he found as a flourishing Mahayana centre and Koh-i-Baba and Deh-i-Ahangaran as the Hīnayāna centres of the Buddhist monks. Some think that the Bamiyan king of this period appears to have been Hepthalites in origin; but as a matter of fact he was under the suzerainty of the prince of the Western Turks.[3]

The princes of Bamiyan were converted to Islam probably during the time of Abbasid dynasty, either in the reign of al-Mansur (755-775 A.D.) or in that of al-Mahdi (775-785A.D.).[4] The conversion of the Bamiyan princes to Islam must have created dismay and a dreadful impact on the fate of the monks and monasteries of this locality. Whether it was on account of the vehment Islamic zeal that led to the persecusion of Buddhists resulting in indiscriminate massacre of the monks and wanton destruction of the monasteries, and presumably some being converted to Islam by persuasion or under pressure, it is remarkable to note that the prince of Bamiyan, after his conversion from Buddhism to Islam, and so also the members of his dynasty enjoyed an influencial position in the court of Baghdad; and the prince of Bamiyan was appointed as the Sher(Ruler) of Bamiyan. In 844 he was also appointed as the Governor of Yaman. The Buddhist community had been left forlorn with no choice but to adopt Islam. In 256 Hizri i.e. 869-870 A.D. Bamiyan was again stormed by Yakub-bin-Laith resulting in the destruction of the images and other

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1. *Ibid.*, p.-9; Allchin, F. & Hammond, N. : *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 234-235.
2. See Dupree, N.H. : *The Valley of Bamiyan*, p.-58.
3. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), Vol.-I, p.-1009.
4. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p.-536.

embellishments of this great monastic establishment. In the following years he removed some of the beautiful and precious images to Baghdad.[1] It seems that those images of the Buddha which once adorned many of the niches and which are not now traceable, were then removed from there and despatched to the capital. It also seems possible that the gems and jewels which were studded on the colossal images were also removed. The images suffered much damage, their hands were mutilated and, in particular their noses were battered.[2] The dismembering of the colossal images must have continued for a long time on account of the Islamic abhorrence for idols of all kinds. In 970 A.D. Bamiyan witnessed another invasion by Alaptagin, the Turkish Governor of Balkh along with his slave Subaktgin. No doubt, the remaining glamour of Bamiyan was further obliterated, and many embellishments and images which escaped earlier rampages also suffered a lot. The prince of Bamiyan was taken captive. It is well known that Subaktgin, who later founded the Ghaznavi dynasty, was fanatically zealous to propagate Islam. He probably caused more havoc than others; and during his reign Islam was permanently established throughout Afghanistan. In 1222 the armies of Changiz Khan again invaded Bamiyan and caused widespread devastations, leaving nothing untouched except the inaccessible images of the Buddha. The damage to colossi did not stop then, rather they suffered destruction in the middle ages too. Aurangzeb, the Indian Mughal emperor (1658-1707 A.D.) who is noted for his religious fanaticism, ordered cannon-shots to be fired at the colossal images of the Buddha, signs of which can still be seen on them.[3]

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[1] *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), Vol.-I, p.-1009; *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p.-536; *East and West*, (N.S.), Vol.-X, Nos. -1&2, p.-21, foot-note 21.

[2] This feature of cutting the nose of an idol can be noticed on thousands of images of the Buddha in India.

[3] Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p.-535.

7

FONDUKISTAN
A Later Seat of Mahāyāna

Senya in Afghanistan

The village of Fondukistan is situated in the valley of the Ghoraband about 5 Kms. south-west of the little town Siahgard on the way between Bamiyan and Kabul, about 128 Kms. from the former and 117 Kms. from the latter. It is only few Kms. away from Charikar, the headquarters of this region. The village has got its name after the term *'Funduq'*,[1] meaning an 'inn' or 'house for travellers', which of course, reminds the 'abode' of the Buddhist pilgrim-monks who used to reside there during their 'wanderings'. We have been told by the villagers that 'Fanduq' is the name of a flower which grows in this area, hence this name.

Inside the valley, on the right bank of the water course below, rises the path steeply which leads to the village where houses are jumbled in undulating manner. The most frequented path of the village rises further steep and to the right at the top, are the ruins of a great Buddhist monastery, now called by the villagers *'qalah'* or fort, obviously on account of the ancient mound. The place is exceedingly charming, serene and secluded, surrounded by hills on three sides; and on the north the water flows below. The natural environment is excellently inspiring for those who wish to engage themselves in spiritual practices or meditation, commonly known as *Paṭipatti* or *Vipassanā* among the Buddhists. Probably no ancient monastic site in Afghanistan is located at a better natural environment than Fondukistan, so ideally suited for monastic life.

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[1] Cf. Steingass, F. : *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (Indian Edition (1973), p.-989.

The mound was excavated by the French Archaeologists who noticed a full-fledged Saṅghārāma that flourished in ancient days.[1] The ruins exhibit a great hall, more or less in square shape, a stūpa erected in the centre in 'Classic style', living cells for the monks, deep recesses waggon-vaulted made in the walls and some other architectures.[2] These recesses were decorated with foliate scroll edges in the shape of single arches supported by pillars. The niches contained ensembles of sculptured figures. The most interesting object is the decoration of walls, of the recesses and the area between pilasters and the openings of the recess with mural paintings. These paintings, as in Bamiyan so also here, indicate the influences of Indian, Sassanian or Iranian and Central Asian or Chinese Arts.[3] The Maitreya figure (?) with blue lotus in right hand may be compared with the famous Ajanta Bodhisattva with blue lotus in hand of about 5th or 6th century A.D.[4] The Indian style is apparent in a figure of a lady in a niche (E) and on many other specimens. The appearance of the Sun and Moon gods clearly exhibit Iranian influence[5] and also on some other figures made in this art.[6] Some figures are painted in Central Asian style as well. The Stucco figures of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Devatās and donors and Nāgas represent a similar fusion of these Arts as noticed on paintings. The Devatās are shown wearing Indian *dhotis* [7] with their hair dresses, round faces; and the Jewels of a Bodhisattva in the central hall are formed in typical Gupta art of India.[8] In one of the sculptures, the Buddha is shown in *Ekaṃsika* style with the right hand uncovered, a purely Indian influence. (The other is *Pāruppana* style, with both the hands covered, as common in cold countries). Some other features also point to Indian Influence.[9] A scene of the funeral of the Buddha is unique in style, the flames rising from the *citā* (pyre) and Buddha lying

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1. *The Indian Arts and Letters*, N.S., Vol.-XII, No.-1 and 2, London (1938), pp. 47-49 J. Hackin's article: *The work of the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, September- 1936 to August; M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-VIII, Paris (1959), Le'monastere Bouddhique de Fondukistan; Cf. Charles Massion's report in *J.A.S.B.*, V, (1836), p.-6.
2. Cf. *M.D.A.F.A.*, VIII, Fig.-H-1, p.-51, also figures-147 and 148.
3. Cf. Rowland, B. ,*Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu and Jain*, p.-103; Litivinsky, B.A. : *Outlines of History of Buddhism in Central Asia; Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, p.-117; also see *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2, p.-45; Barret, D. : *Sculptures of the Shahi Period* , in *Oriental Art* (N.S.), Vol.-III, No.-2 (1951), p.-57; *The Indian Arts and Letters*, N.S., Vol.-XII, No.-2, p.-48.
4. *M.D.A.F.A.*, VIII, Fig.-196, 198.
5. *Ibid.*, Fig.-200.
6. *Ibid.*, Fig.-199, 201.
7. *Ibid.*, Fig.-174, 175.
8. *M.D.A.F.A.*, VIII, Fig.-171.
9. *Ibid.*, Fig.-176, 177.

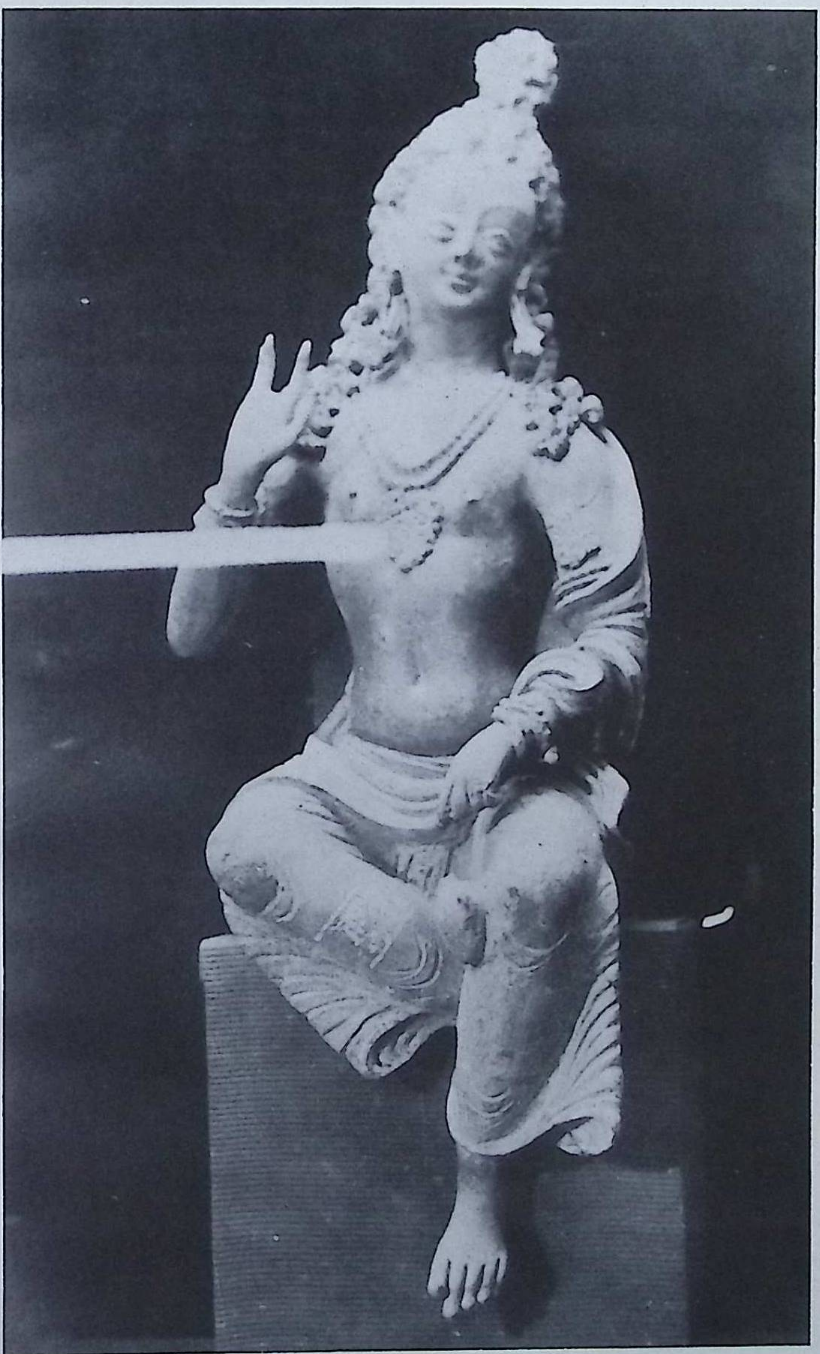

Figure 40 *Fondukistan:*
Bodhisattva (clay) 8th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

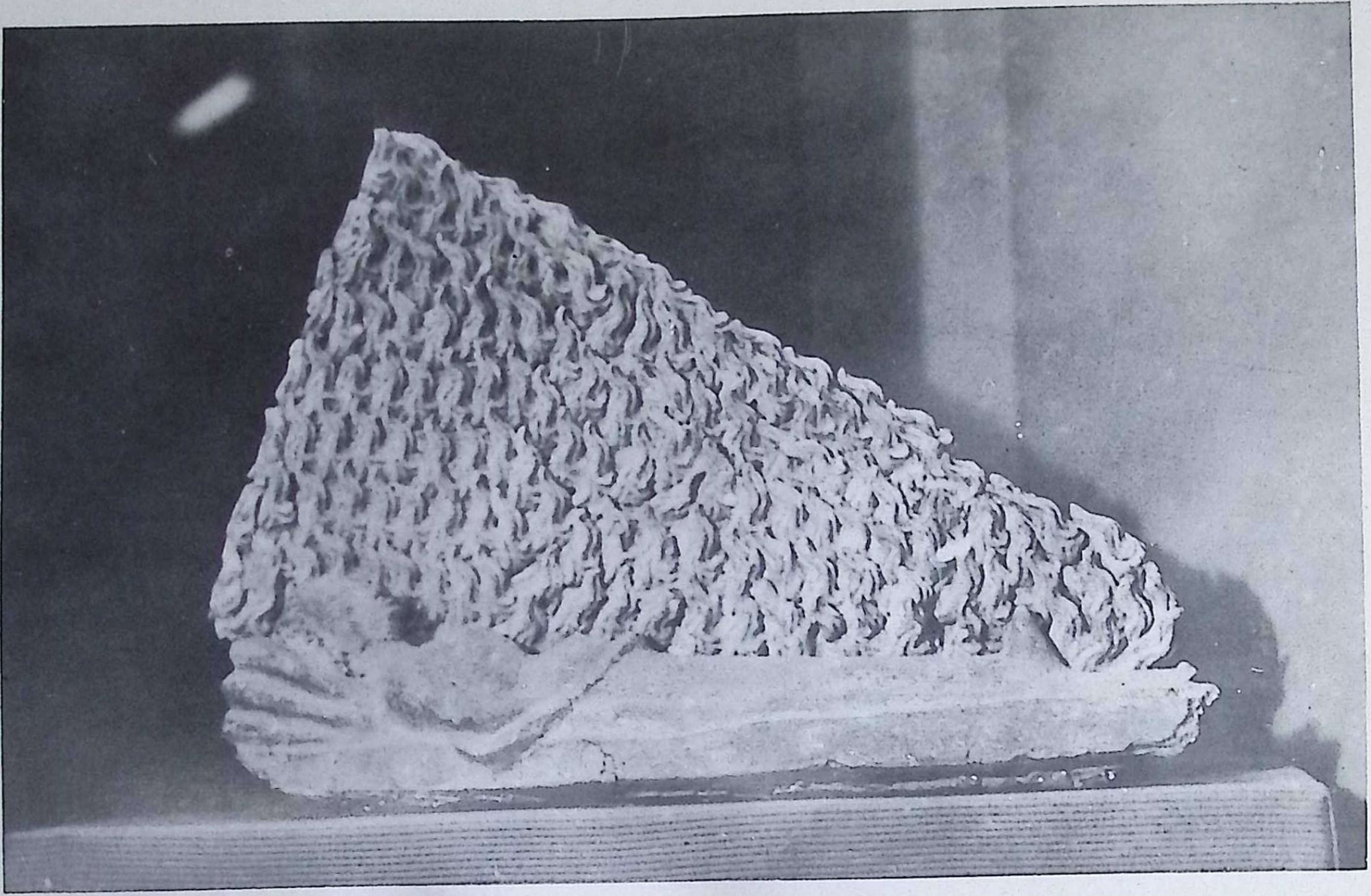

Figure 41 *Fondukistan:*
Mother of Jyotsika (clay 8th cent. A.D.) (Kabul Museum).

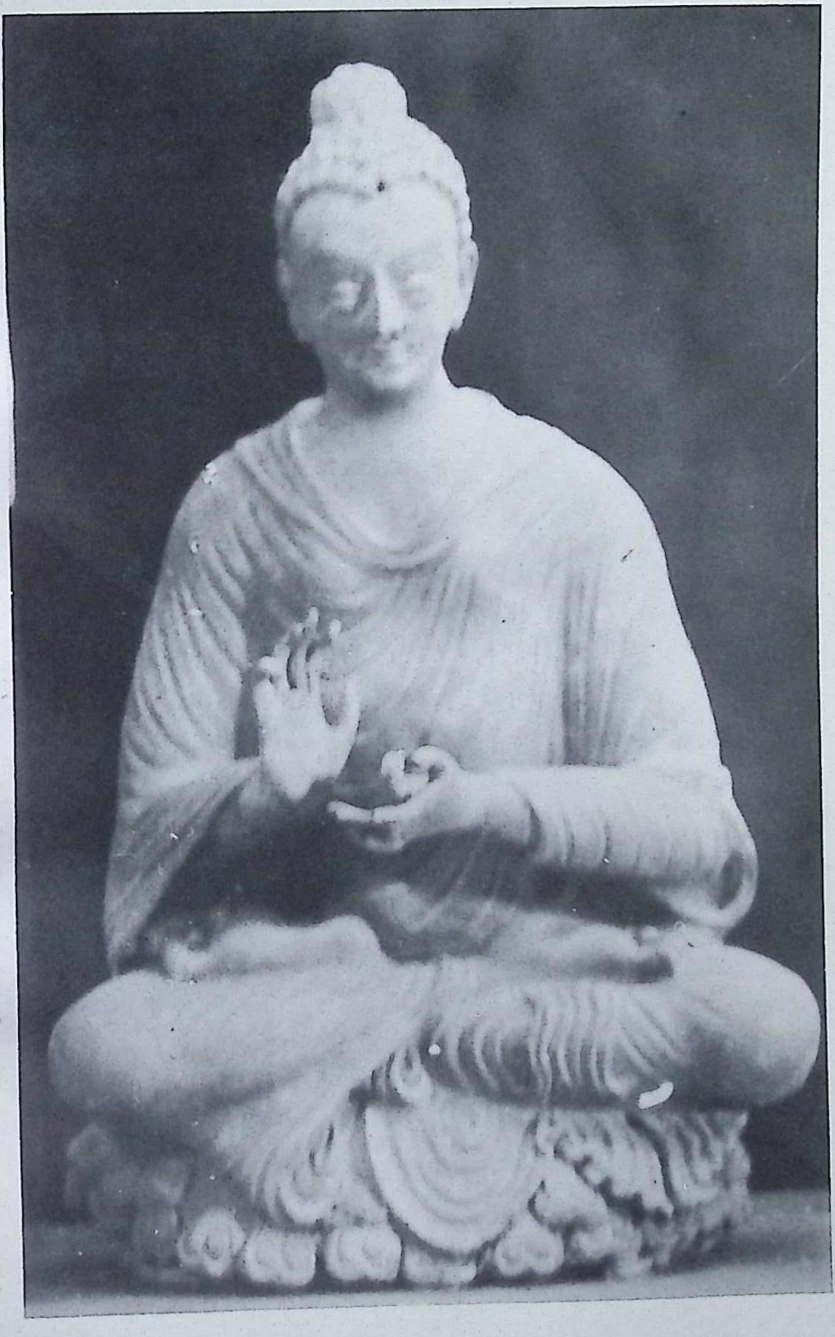

Figure 42 *Fondukistan:*
Seated Buddha in preaching *mudrā* (clay)
8th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

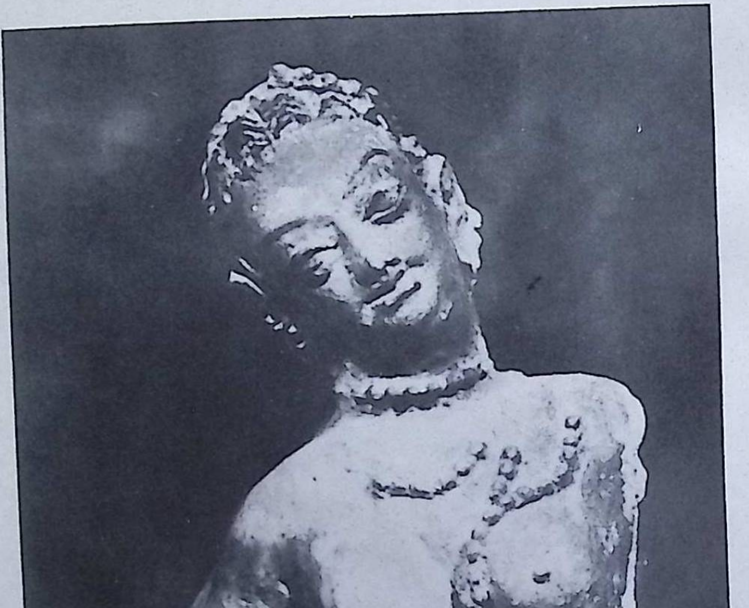

Figure 43 *Fondukistan:*
A Lady (clay) 8th cent. A.D. (Kabul Museum).

upward (not on right side as usual).[1] The king and queen portrayed in the two headless terra-cotta figures are compared with the 'Palace scene' noticed in Ajantā (cave No.-2).[2] Stucco heads with typical Iranian caps and long faces are modelled on Central Asian art,[3] while those figures with flat noses and conical caps suggest Chinese or Western Turkistan influence.[4] The fusion of Indian, Iranian, Central Asian or Chinese arts is due to the cosmopolitan monk society that was dwelling in this Saṅghārāma. A similar mixed art is also noticed at Bamiyan and to some extent at Ajanta too. The mixed art may suggest that the population of monks belonged to different countries and lands, all dwelling together at Fondukistan. Very likely these monk-dwellers were the creators of the decorations done in the monasteries. The Buddhist monastic community of Fondukistan Saṅghārāma probably included the monks hailing from India, Iran, Central Asia and probably from China besides the local monks. They all lived together and followed and practised the Dhamma of Tathāgata and contributed in decorating the monastery in their own styles.

An Ideal Monastic Environment

As pointed out earlier, Fondukistan was an ideally suited place with excellent scenic beauty endowed with serenity and solitude, 'neither too far nor too close to', habitation, fit for meditational and other spiritual practices and easily approachable.'[5] Although it did not lay on the high road, it was not very far from the road that proceeded from Bamiyan to Kapiśa.

The antiquities recovered from this ancient Buddhist place show that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition here during 6th or 7th century A.D. Fondukistan was a full-fledged monastery or Ārāma where shrines, caityas, stūpas, congregational hall, monastic cells and meditational rooms were erected. The vihāra was adorned with paintings, stucco figures of the Buddha and other deities.

It is to our disadvantage that no literary record of this place is available to us which can throw light on the history of this great Saṅghārāma. Only archaeological data are the materials to know anything about this place. No written epigraph or any other inscribed material has been found, except a few coins found buried in cemetery urns below the 'princely couple' in one of the niches (No.-E).[1] It includes counter-marked coins of 'Sri Sahi' and silver drachms of Sassanian king, Khusro-II (A.D. 591-628), and copper coins of Napki types. One of these is struck in year 37 i.e. 657 A.D., but the two counter-marks can be dated to 682 A.D. and 689 A.D.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Fig. -167.
[2] Cf. *Marg*, Vol.-XXIV, No.-2, p.-46, Fig.-4.
[3] *M.D.A.F.A.*, VIII, Fig.-183, 184, 185.
[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, Fig.-186, also see : Litivinsky; B.A. : *Kushan Studies in U.S.S.R.*, p.-117.
[5] Cf. Upasak : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 206; *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), pp. 252-253.

Being located at a solitary place in the interior area, very few pilgrims could easily reach there and hence no written account of the place is available. Being located at a secluded place it escaped the notice of early invaders, particularly the Hūṇas who have done some harm to the Buddhist monasteries in Afghanistan and it remained unhurt from their inroads. The recovery of coins datable to 7th century A.D., which were no doubt the offerings of the devotees, suggests that the monastery was founded earlier, as also evident from some of the paintings and sculptures which can be dated to 6th century A.D.[3] The foundation of the Saṅghārāma may be placed sometime earlier, say 5th century A.D. or so. Since Fondukistan was not very far from Kapiśa where Buddhism was established much earlier and was in its heyday during the Kuṣāṇas, in 2nd century A.D., it might have attracted some monks interested in solitary 'abode'. They might have come to this place in early times and might have resided in ordinary huts in the beginning. In due course, it developed to a full-fledged Saṅghārāma, probably because of being the residence of some important monk-saint or saints. By the time of the Turki Sahis in 7th century A.D. it became an important Saṅghārāma.

A Mahāyāna Centre

In the beginning it probably developed as a centre of Hīnayāna school of Buddhism, probably of Later Theravāda, as followed by the Mahāsāṅghikas or any of its branches like Sarvāstivāda etc. On the basis of the sculptural art, Benjamin Rowland rightly observes, "Originally Hīnayāna statues of the monastic Buddha were transformed into Mahāyāna icons of transfigured Śākyamuni by being 'dressed up' in actual jewels and garments which in the time came to be represented in statues like the one from Fondukistan. The so called 'bejwelled Buddha'[4] is seen in many statues of the last phase of Mahāyāna Buddhism."[5] No doubt the statues and stucco figures and paintings as noticed in Fondukistan indicate it to be a centre of

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[1] *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-VIII, p.-56, Figs.-89, 190, 191.

[2] Allchin F. and Hammond N. : *Archaeology in Afghanistan*, p.-253; *Indian Art and Letters*, N.S., Vol.-XII, p.-9.

[3] Cf. Rowland, B. : *Ancient Art from Afghanistan*, pp. 116-117.

[4] Cf. : *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-VIII, Fig.-179.

[5] Rowland, B. : *The Art and Architecture of India, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (1956), p.-103.

Mahāyāna Buddhism. It developed probably as a centre of those Mahāyānī monks who were mainly engaged in meditational practices and spirituality. That it was a Mahāyāna centre is also evident from the recovery of a number of stucco figures of the Devatās and their frescoes found from there. We know that by this time (i.e. 7th century A.D.) a number of Mahāyāna Buddhist monasteries had developed in India at places like Nalanda, Vikramaśilā, Oddantapura and some in Kasmira. We learn that a monk of Nagarahāra (Jalalabad, E. Afghanistan) had established a monastery at a place presently called Ghosaravan, near Nalanda and later he became the Ācārya of Nalanda.[1] Evidently there existed direct contacts between Indian monastic establishments and their counterparts in Afghanistan. The Indian influence on paintings and sculptures in Afghanistan is evident by enough to suggest that monks from India and other places were dwelling in this monastery where they practised Mahāyāna Buddhism. Unlike most of the monasteries that were following Later Hīnayāna Buddhism, monastery at this Fondukistan was following the other form, the Mahayana Buddhism. As stated above, in the beginning it might have been a centre of Later Theravāda or Hīnayāna school but by the 6th century A.D. it turned into a Mahāyāna centre as evident from the antiquities recovered from there.

End of the Saṅghārāma

The monastery of Fondukistan flourished for about three or four centuries and came to an end only in 10th or 11th century A.D. on account of Arabas' attack on Afghanistan. Buddhism disappeared from this land for ever as Islam supplanted it. The city of Kapiśa was sacked by Ibrahim-bin-Jabul, the Governor of Zabulistan in the year 743 A.D.. The Hindu Sahi rulers had to move first to Kabul and then to Udbhāṇḍapur on account of the Arabs. They ultimately took the possession of Kabul valley, including the adjoining areas of Herat and Kandahar. They not only established their suzerainty over this country but also indulged into a lot of persecutions against the Buddhists whom they called *'kafir'* or infidel. They razed the monasteries and temples to the ground and the monks living there either had to flee or to embrace Islam. This was the fate of all the Buddhist establishments in Afghanistan and Fondukistan was no exception.

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[1] *Indian Antiquary*, 1988.

8

KANDAHAR
Mauryan Regimental Border

Kandahar is the second largest town of Afghanistan situated at its southern border. It is an ancient city and was once a part of Achaeminid empire in early days.[1] It was later captured by Alexander the Great but soon it came under the rule of Candragupta Maurya as it was ceded to him by the Greek king Seleucus, who was defeated by the Mauryan emperor. Seleucus had to surrender four provinces, including Kandahar, then called Arachosia, the others being Aria, Gadrosia and Paropamade. After the collapse of Mauryan empire Kandahar formed a part of the kingdoms of Indo-Greeks, Indo-Parthians, Kuṣāṇas and Sassanians successively. Ultimately it came under the Islamic rule of Abbasids, Ghaznavids and Mangols in succession.

Kandahar, Alexandria of Arachosia (?)

It is generally believed that Kandahar was 'Alexandria', the capital of Arachosia, the name given by Alexander the Great. On the basis of an account of the overland routes between Levant and India given by Isidore of Charax about the Parthian stations in 1st century B.C., Kandahar is identified with Alexandrapolis, the metropokis of Arachosia; and also called the 'Greek city'. The whole area is however described by Isidore of Charax as 'White India'. Mr. Schoff is of the opinion that *'White-India'* was called for Arachosia in the beginning and subsequently for the modern Afghanistan; and Alexandrapolis or Alexandria is the name of the capital of Arachosia, the modern Kandahar.[2] Isidore of Charax writes," There are the city of Sigal; the city of Min, the city of Palacenti. And the city of Sigal; in that place is the royal residence of Sacae; and nearby is the city of Chorochoad and the city of Demetrias, and then Alexandra-polis, the metropolis of Arachosia; it is Greek and by it flows the river Arachotus. As far as this place the land is under the rule of Parthians."[1]

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[1] See : *East and West,* VIII; No.-3(1957), 'Ghazni', by Alessio Bombaci, p.-250 ff.

[2] Schoff, Wilford H. : Edt. & Trans., *Parthian Stations of Isidor of Charax,* pp.9 & 34; also see : Fox, Robin Lane: *Alexander the Great,* London (1973), p.-293.

It is remarkable to observe that while Alexandria or Alexandrapolis is said to have been located on the bank of the river Arachotus, the present town of Kandahar stands on plain, between the Tarnak and Arghandab rivers, quite far from them. The town is bounded on the north, north-west and north-east by a line of rough and precipitous hills. It is also noteworthy that Alexander founded many cities after his name and Alexandrapolis or Alexandria of Arachosia was one of them.[2] To identify the present town of Kandahar with Alexandrapolis of Arachosia is rather doubtful. It may be sought somewhere else, possibly further west, or may be identified with Ghazni.[3] It is very likely that the town of Kandahar came up rather lately and gained importance when occupied by the Mauryans who stationed there army personnels in order to safeguard the border of the kingdom. Probably Alexander also stationed some Greek army there with a view to combat any rebellion or revolt from Acaeminids who were conquered by him earlier. It appears that it started to develop as a military regimental headquarters, not as an administrative centre or as a metropolis. And, when it came under the Mauryan occupation, the border was strengthened by putting Indian soldiers there. It is interesting to observe that the area being heavily occupied by the army personnels for a long time, first by Alexander's army and later by the Indian army, began to be called 'military regimental place' or *Skandhāvāra* by the people, a Sanskrit name probably given by the Indians. It appears that the present name 'Kandahāra' is a derivative from this term, *Skandhāvāra*. It is also equally interesting to note that one of the sub-divisions of Kandahar is presently called *'Daṇḍa'*, [4] a pure Sanskrit word, meaning 'army'. Yet again, the sub-division next to Daṇḍa is called *Damana*[5] by name, a Sanskrit word meaning 'suppression' or 'subdue', which also relates to some military operation carried against the people to 'suppress' or 'subdue', probably by the

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1. Schoff, Wilfor H. : Op. cit, p.-9; also see : Fox, Robin Lane: *Alexander the Great,* London (1973), p.-225.
2. Fox, Robin Lane: *Alexander the Great,* London (1973), p.-293.
3. Carrutelle, Giovanni Pugliese : *Serie Oriantale Roma,* XXIX (1964), p.-37; Tarn. W.E. : *The Greeks in India and Bactria,* pp. 469-477.
4. Admec, L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan,* Vol.-5, p.-220.
5. *Ibid.,* p. -225.

Mauryans. It is also to be noted that 'Alexandria' is always transformed as 'Iskandaria' or 'Sikandaria' in Persian and also in all the languages current in Afghanistan. And accordingly, Kandahar if Alexandria, should also have been called Iskandaria or Sikandaria; but it is not so. In all probability it represents the ancient term *Skandhāvāra*, the phonetic semblance of which also tends to suggest so, nearer to this term than any other.

Kandahar and Aśoka

No doubt Kandahar was an important place during the Mauryan period. It is significant to note that as many as three inscriptions of Aśoka have been found form Kandahar alone.[1] One of them was discovered from Shahr-i-Kona (or the old city) inscribed on a bolder at the foot of the hill called Chehl-Zina which is complete. It is *in situ* and is a bilingual and biscriptal inscription written in Greek and Aramaic languages and scripts. The Greek version of the edict begins with the name of the emperor *Priyadasi*, and got to be inscribed in the 10th year of his coronation. The Buddhist emperor exhorts 'piety' (*Dhamma*) and 'non-killing of living beings'. It is a Minor Rock Edict of Aśoka. The second edict is a fragmentary, written in Greek script and language. It was discovered by a German physician from the ruins of Old Kandahar city in 1963, now preserved in the National-Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul. It is engraved on a rectangular piece of porous limestone block. It contains the text of the end of rock Edict XII and the beginning of Rock Edict XIII; and so, it may be regarded as a part of a large slab which once contained all the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Aśoka, as found elsewhere at several places. We may hope to discover other portions of it from Kandahar. The third inscription of Aśoka is also fragmentary one, written in Aramaic script on a stone block. It was bought in the bazar of Kandahar and its find-spot is unknown (now in an Italian collection) and contains only seven lines, a part of the Pillar Edict-VII in a mixed Aramaic and Prakrit language.[2]

That these epigraphs were discovered from Kandahar is of great importance indicating tits importance during the time of Asoka. The use of Greek and Aramaic scripts and languages also indicates that Kandahar was inhabited by the Greeks or Yonas and Kambojas or Iranians, who are referred to many a time in the Aśokan inscriptions.[3] The Greeks or Yonas were no doubt settled in many parts of Afghanistan since the time of Alexander the Great and Kambojas or Iranians probably even earlier. Aśoka in his inscriptions mentions about them, where he introduced his policy of 'Piety' or Dhamma for which he appointed Dhammamahāmātra officials.

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[1] Allchin F.R. & Hammond N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 192-194.

[2] Cf. Ibid.,pp. 193-198; also see : *J.A.*, Vol.-254(1966), pp. 437-465.

[3] Yonas and Kambojas (Greeks and Iranians) are referred to in Rock-Edicts, II, V, XIII.

Buddhism appears to have been introduced in Kandahar during his time. He being a zealous Buddhist took several measures to spread the Religion. During his time the Third Buddhist Council was held, a great event in the history of Buddhism about which we have discussed elsewhere also. On this occasion missionaries were despatched to many foreign countries for the propagation of Buddhism. One monk-saint Mahārakkhita by name was despatched to *Yona* country along with some other monks to disseminate Buddhism, the Early Theravāda or Vibhajjavāda school, which Aśoka followed and patronised.[1] Mahārakkhita is said to have been successful in his mission as he could convert 'one hundred seventy thousand people' of Yona country and 'ten thousand entered into the Saṅgha as monks'.[2] *Yona Raṭṭha* or *Yona-Loka* is identified with those parts of Afghanistan where the Greeks had settled, particularly in the central and southern parts of the country. Kapiśa and Balkh were also the regions where Greek population was settled. A town known as 'Alexandria of Caucacus' was founded by Alexander, which is identified with Kapiśa. No doubt some Greek settlements were also stationed at Kandahar by Alexander.

Mahārakkhita appears to have visited Kandahar and proselytised the Yona population living there. He might have stayed there for some time along with his other fellow monks. This was the first introduction of Buddhism in this region.

We have seen above that Kandahar was the headquarters of border-military-force of the Mauryans. A good number of Indian military personnels might have been there in the camps. Some might have hailed from Magadha or elsewhere from India and many might have been the Buddhists. It may be presumed that they were the first who brought the message of Buddha there prior to Maharakkhita. But, the actual proselytism began with his missionary party when Buddhism took a firm root there.

It is very likely that by the initiation of Buddhism through the efforts of Mahārakkhita and his party, some monasteries, shrines and caityas or stūpas were also erected, of which no archaeological materials of any kind have yet come to light, but it is not impossible to find some in future like the three epigraphs of Aśoka from here. Perhaps Buddhism began to flourish since then in Kandahar and continued for centuries as the faith of the people. It finally disappeared only after the Arabs' attacks in 10 or 11th century A.D. when Islam was introduced. It is pity that we have very little materials to know the history of Buddhism of this area, but Buddhism definitely flourished there as a elsewhere in Afghanistan. Many Buddhist sites which still possess their Buddhist names besides some minor antiquities of the monastic establishments, are extant there.

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[1] *Dipavamsa*, VIII,9; *Mahavamsa*, XII,5,39; *Samnatapasadika* (Nalanda) Vol.-I, pp. 55, 58, 59.

[2] *Ibid*.

The discovery of Aśoka's epigraph *in situ* at the foot of Chehl Zina hill in the Shahr-i-Kona (Old city) area certainly indicates the rich archaeological prospects there. It is hoped that by digging some of the ancient sites in Shar-i-Kona of Kandahar, we may get new materials which may throw further light on the history of Buddhism of this region. Archaeologists have identified several ancient monuments in this area as Buddhists. Mr. G. Fussman has been able to locate a Buddhist monastery and a stūpa in this area.[1] We are giving herebelow some probable place-names which may be related to Buddhism.

Some Probable Buddhist Sites

We have mentioned above that Daṇḍa and Damana, the subdivisions of Kandahar, still hold their Sanskrit names and should be the ancient areas. Similarly there are some other places which may be connected with Buddhist culture and history. Although these places still await proper exploration, there are, no doubt, some prospective sites which may yield new materials to reconstruct the history of Buddhism of this region. Following are some of the places which may be of some significance for our purpose.

1-Panchawai or Panjwai

Panjawai or Panchawai is the name of a village and also of a sub-division of Kandahar province situated on the left bank of the Arghandab river, next to Daṇḍa sub-division.[2] The sub-division *(Wolswali)* is bounded in the west by Maiwand, in the north by the Khakriz and the Arghandab, in the east by Daṇḍa and Shega and in the south by Reg districts. Panchawai *Wolesvali* or sub-division includes about 37 villages and a number of them still retain their old names which may be connected with Buddhism. For instance, a village is called 'Daham Bas',[1] which may be a derivative of *'Dammavāsa'* or *'Dharmavāsa'* indicating some Buddhist shrine. Yet another village called 'Nalagham' which may be the representation of 'Nālakagrāma'. Similarly Khugyani[2] may be connected with the term *Ksudrayānī*, indicating to Hīnayāna and so also 'Danagar' village[3] is a derivative of *Dānaghara*, meaning a 'house for offerings' (alms to the monks). It is interesting to find a village which still holds the name of great Buddhist emperor Aśoka. The village is still called 'Aśoka' or 'Aśoga', situated on the right bank of the Arghandab, some 12 miles from Kandahar.[4] Yet another village Mazagam[5] may be the representation of *Majjhagāma* (Pali) or *Madhyagrāma* (Sanskrit).

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[1] Cf. Allchin, F.R. & Hammond, N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 230-232.

[2] Adamec, L.W. : *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-5, p.-380 also see map on p.-221.

Panchawai or Panjwai itself may be the derivative of the word *'Pañcavaggiya'*, the 'First Five Disciples of Buddha'.

Buddhawan hill and Buddhawan Darwaza

Close to Panchawai bazar, there is a hillock locally called Budhawan, and also on the foot of the hill a group of four hamlets running parallel and close to the Arghandab is called Budhwan along the left bank of the Arghandab to Kokharan, where it joins the Kandahar-Herat road.[6] Right up on the face of rocky ridge, is a large cave forming a big hall probably dug by men, although some believe it to be a natural cave.[7] Local people call it Jamshed.[8] But a close observation of the cave leaves no doubt that it was once the abode of Buddhist mendicants. There is one cavity below the hall to serve as water reservoir, in which the water can still be seen. Before we approach this hill from Panchawai, on the way, we find the ruins of two stūpas built of stone bolders, not very high from the ground, which local people call 'Budhawan Darwaza', meaning the 'Gate of Budhwan', simply because they stand side by a side at a distance of about ten metres each and look like two pylons of a gate. Budhawan hill, Budhwan hamlet, Budhawan Darawaza all evidently got the name connected with Buddha. These names suggest that this area including Panchawai was populated by the Buddhists, probably from the time of Aśoka.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p.-124.
[2] Admec, L.W. : *Historical & Political Gezetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-5, p.-288.
[3] *Ibid.*, p.-127.
[4] *Ibid.*, p.-60.
[5] *Ibid.*, p.-335.
[6] *Ibid.*, p.-73.
[7] *Ibid.*, p.-73.
[8] *Ibid.*, p.-192.

Yet another village situated on the left bank of the Tarnak, called 'Gurgam', about 12 miles south-west of Kandahar.[1] The village appears to be of some interest since a conspicuous mound stands near this village. The mound appears to be the debris of an old monastery or a temple. The name of the village as Gurgam is obviously derived from *'Guru-Grāma'* (a village of the Master) for being located near place of *Guru,* or Lord (Buddha), (as we get Begram for *Vihāragrāma,* Samangan for *Samaṇagāma* etc.). The mound is called 'Ghundi-i-Gurgam', Ghundi meaning 'mound'.[2]

There are some other villages also around Kandahar which still preserve their ancient names. We may mention a few of them, for instance, Damarsi, derived from *Dharma ṛisi,* which is located 13 miles north-west of Kandahar.[3] Gorakh village[4] retains its ancient name *Gorakṣa,* or 'Protector of Cow' probably following the message of Aśoka as recorded in his bilingual edict at Kandahar in which he preaches non-killing of animals.

It is needless to say that if and when Kandahar region is fully explored and its mounds are excavated, we are sure to get important materials which can help us to reconstruct political, cultural and religious history of this area. No doubt Kandahar is an important ancient place of Afghanistan which has contributed much towards the history and culture of the country. Its glorious past can be reconstructed when materials hidden in its ancient mounds and monuments, scattered throughout the province are fully brought to light. It is pity that no literary account is available and we have to depend on the archaeological evidences alone.

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1. *Ibid.* p.-170.
2. Adamec L.W. : *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan* Vol.-5, p.-170.
3. *Ibid.,* p.-126.
4. *Ibid.* p.-120.

9

GHAZNI
A Centre of Later Buddhism

While one of the north-western trade-routes connected India with Central Asia through Balkh, the other connected Khorasan, Persia and Asia Minor via Ghazni and Kandahar. The invaders traversed either of these routes who created devastations in Afghanistan for time and again. Cyrus I (550-539 B.C.) was the first Achaeminid emperor who attacked Afghanistan and conquered Kandahar and annexed the area upto Gandhāra. The next king of this dynasty is Darius I (522-539 B.C.) who extended his empire further in the east and captured some parts of India. These Achaeminid emperors invaded through the second route via Kandahar-Ghazni.

Alexander the Great, attacked on Afghanistan in about 325 B.C. following this route and is said to have established a town after his name, Alexandria of Arachosia, as indicated by Isidore of Charax and some Greek writers.[1] We have discussed earlier its identification when dealing in Kandahar and believe that Kandahar was not Alexandria of Arachosia, rather probably it was Ghazni or somewhere west of Kandahar. Ghazni no doubt was a city situated in the province of Arachosia, also known from the Persian cuneiform inscriptions as one of the parts of Achaeminid empire, mentioned as *Herakuvatis* (Skt. Sarasvati),[2] identified with Ghazni.

After the sudden death of Alexander the Great, the eastern part of his kingdom came under the rule of Seleucus Niketor. He attacked on the north-western border of India but had to suffer a defeat by the hands of Candragupta Maurya and had to cede four of his eastern provinces, namely, Aria, Arachosia, Gadrosia and Paropamisadae. In order to have full grip over these new areas the Mauryan emperor probably shifted the head-quarters of Arachosia from Ghazni to Kandahar where he stationed a considerable army to safeguard the westernmost border of his kingdom. As a result, Ghazni probably lost its earlier political importance and Kandahar became strategically more important.

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[1] See : Tarn, W.W. : *Greeks in India and Bactria*, pp. 469-473.

[2] *East and West*, VIII, No.-3(1957), Ghazni: by Allesio Bambaci, p.-250 ff.

We have not yet found any antiquity of Mauryan period from Ghazni which leads some to believe that it was not under the Mauryan empire,[1] but it does not appear to be correct. Ghazni was a part of Arachosia under the Mauryan kingdom. Hiuen-tsiang, who visited Ghazni in about 644 A.D. writes, "There are ten stūpas built by Aśoka-Rājā, and several tens of Deva temples." Evidently Ghazni was under Aśoka's kingdom which flourished as a Buddhist place since his time. It is true that Hiuen-tsiang's account is of a late period which mentions Asoka's rule there, but we may hope to find some archaeological materials of Mauryan period from there in future.

Introduction of Buddhism in Ghazni

Buddhism had already arrived in Uḍyāna, Kapiśa and probably in Bamiyan and Balkh before Aśoka. We have mentioned earlier about the Third Buddhist Council which was held during the reign of Aśoka, when Buddhist Missionaries were despatched to different foreign lands under his patronage. We have also mentioned earlier about Thera Mahārakkhita who was sent to Yona country, which has since been identified with Central, Eastern, Northern and Southern parts of Afghanistan where the Greek settlements were residing since Alexander the Great. Ghazni, probably being Alexandria of Arachosia, was also a place of Greek settlement in Afghanistan. Mahārakkhita appears to have come to Ghazni from Uḍyāna and stayed there for some time for the propagation of Buddhism and then proceeded further south to Kandahar. We learn from the Pali texts that 'several thousands of people were then converted to Buddhism' and 'many thousand' joined the Buddhist Saṅgha by becoming monks in the Yona country. We have no idea whether Mahāsāṅghikas or their followers, who had already established the Later Theravāda Buddhism in Udyana and elsewhere in Afghanistan before Aśoka, had penetrated to the southern part of Afghanistan, upto Ghazni or Kandahar, probably not. In all probability, it was only during the reign of Aśoka, in 3rd century B.C., that Buddhism was introduced in Ghazni by the Buddhist missionary under Thera Mahārakkhita. The Early Theravāda

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[1] *East and West*, VIII-No.3. (1957), pp. 250ff.

Buddhism or Vibhajjavāda was propagated by him and his other fellow-monk-saints in this area. The Mahāsāṅghikas however might have established some centres there in later centuries, that we will discuss later, as known from an inscription engraved on a relic casket of Buddha found from a place called Wardak, a place situated between Kabul and Ghazni of Kusana period in which the name of the Mahāsāṅghika school occurs for the first time on an epigraph of Afghanistan. By the support and favour of emperor Aśoka, some monastery or monasteries might have come up at Ghazni and some stūpas and shrines also might have been erected there. Aśoka probably got erected some stūpas for depositing the relics of the Buddha, as informed by Hiuen-tsiang. This was the period of first large scale preselytism among the Greeks or Yonas of Afghanistan and Ghazni was probably one of the places where Greeks adopted Buddhism. Buddhism perhaps took its first root during Aśoka's time and continued to be the religion of the people of this area for several countries.

Menander's Period

By the fall of the Mauryan empire the provinces of Afghanistan were occupied by the Bactrian Greeks or Indo-Greeks where Buddhism was already established and a good Greek population living there had already adopted Buddhism. These Indo-Bactrian kings naturally were acquainted with this religion and very likely some had even professed Buddhism, although we do not know anything definite about it. As a matter of fact these Indo-Greek or Graeco-Bactrian kings are known by their coins alone found throughout Afghanistan and north-western part of India. It is difficult indeed to say anything of their individual faiths. But, we believe, those Indo-Greek kings who bear the title of *Dhramikas* (in Prakrit) or *Diakios* (in Greek) were Buddhists, although it is not fully authenticated. Only one king known by literature is Menander who was a Buddhist. The famous Pali text, the *Milindapañho* records his philosophical discussions with a Buddhist monk, Nāgasena by name at his capital Sāgala about which we have discussed elsewhere. He is described as converted to Buddhist faith and professed the Early Theravāda Buddhism which he followed for the whole life. He is said to have erected stūpas and monasteries throughout his kingdom. We do not know whether he ruled over Ghazni, but Buddhism, particularly Early Theravāda, received new impetus during his time. During Menander's period, Buddhism at Ghazni might have received some impetus by him or by other Buddhists.

Kaniska's Rule in Ghazni and Buddhism

Kiniska's patronage to Buddhism is well-known. who followed Sarvāstivāda form of Buddhism or Later Theravāda school. He ruled over almost all parts of Afghanistan and controlled his western part from one of his capitals at Kapiśa. Kapiśa was no doubt a great seat of Buddhism. Ghazni was also then a flourishing centre. We have discovered some Buddhist antiquities of this period from some places near Ghazni. The town of Wardak or Jagatu-i-Wardak, a place between Kabul and Ghazni, about 20 miles north of the latter, has yielded a number of Buddhist antiquities belonging to this period about which we have discussed elsewhere. The collection of sherds from there points to Kuṣāṇa age. Ruins of some monasteries also have been discovered in the vicinity of this town which suggest that Buddhism was in a flourishing state in this area.[1] An inscribed relic casket of Śākyamuni Buddha was found from a stūpa at Warkak, now in British Museum, London, which is of great significance.[2] The inscription is written on the vase containing the corporeal relics of Buddha, in Kharostī script. It is dated 51 in Kaniṣka era and mentions the name of 'Maharaja Rājatiraja' Huviska, the successor of Kaniṣka. This relic casket inscription is the only written epigraph which refers to the 'teachers' of Mahāsāṅghika school. It also gives the name of the vihāra from where the relic casket was found. It is called *'Vagramariga Vihāra'*. The relics were established by one Kamagulya, son of Vagramarega. The name of the vihāra as *'Vagramariga'* evidently points to the vihāra that got the name after its donor, Vagramarega, (the father of, Kamagulya who enshrined the relics) who erected this vihāra. We know the names of many vihāras after the donors' names, for instance, Jetavana-Anathapindikarama of Srāvasti, Jivakambmavana of Rājagṛiha, Ghositarama of Kosambi etc. Similarly this vihāra, 'Vagramariga' was so called for being donated by Vagaramarega to the 'teachers of Mahasanghika' school. Since it was the donation of the father of Kamagulya who is said to have deposited the corporeal relics of Śākyamuni Buddha during Huviska's time, this vihāra was probably erected during the time of Kaniska, in about 1st century A.D. That the inscription refers to the 'teachers of Mahāsānghika' school of Buddhism is also of some importance for the history of Buddhism in this area. It is evident that the Mahāsāṅghikas, who were probably the first to establish Buddhism in Uḍyāna (E. Afghanistan), held great predominance in this area also. They had probably some centres other than that of Wardak. No doubt Wardak was an important centre of this school as evident by the corporeal relics of the Buddha enshrined there. It is interesting to note that the very name Wardak probably carries its ancient name *'Varasthala'*, meaning 'great spot', because of the relics of the 'Great' person, the Buddha, enshrined there, or, it is Bhadraka after the Bhadrayānī monks, a branch of the Mahāsāṅghikas. Whatever may be the derivative of Wardak, it is evident that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in this area of Ghazni during the Kusana's periods. It is also interesting to mention here that a tribe of this region still holds its title as 'Bhadraka', obviously retaining the ancient name, the followers of Bhadrayānī sect of Buddhism.

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[1] Allchin F.R. and Hammond : *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-323; Fussman A. : *Arts Asitique;* Vol.-30, pp.65-130.

[2] *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, Pt.-1, pp. 165-170; *Essays on Indian Antiquities*, by James Prinsep, pp.61 ff.; *J.R.A.S.*, XX (1863), pp. 255 ff; *J.A.S.B.*, XXX(1861), pp. 337 ff. ; XXXII (1863), pp. 428ff.; *J.R.A.S.*, 1912, pp. 1060 ff.; 1914, pp. 126 ff.; *E.I.*, XI, pp. 220ff.; *J.A.*, XI, pp. 569 ff.; *Ariana Antiqua*, (1841), pp. 17 ff.

In the interior mountain region, west of Ghazni at a place known as Dast-i-Nawar, five inscriptions in three languages, in Greek, Prakrit and in an unknown language, written in Greek and Kharosti scripts have been discovered, which of course do not mention Buddhism but speak about Wim Kadphises, the predecessor of Kaniṣka.[1] The use of Prakrit and Greek suggests that some population knowing these languages were also living there. We know that a number of Buddhist texts of Later Theravada schools of Buddhism have been written in Prakrit language and many Greeks had adopted Buddhism during Asoka's time. It may have been possible that some Buddhist population might have been living there in early Christian era.

Yet another Buddhist monastic cave complex has been discovered from a place called Homay Qala or Humau Qala, situated half way between Ghazni and Maqur in Qurabagh-i-Ghazni. This cave complex is an important site of Kusana period. It includes a large vihāra, living cells for the monks and many other monastic rooms,[2] indicating that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in this area during Kuṣāṇa period. The Buddhist monks, who practised meditation and spirituality probably used to dwell at this place for it being ideally suited for austere monasticism and *vipassanā*.

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1. Allchin F.R. & Hammond : N. : *The Archaeology of Afghanistan*, pp. 238-240; Fussman H. : Documents epigraphique Koushans, *Bulletin de la Ecole Frenchise de-Extreme Orient*, Vol.-LXI, 1974, pp. 1-66.
2. See : Verardi, G. : "*The Buddhist Cave Complex of Homay Qala,*" *South Asian Archaeology*, 1975, pp. 119-126; also see Allchin F.R. and Hammond N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-278.

Huna's Rule

Buddhism appears to have flourished in Ghazni in spite of the invasion of the Hūṇas in later 5th century a.D. They probably passed off without making much harm to the established religion of this area. They conquered the country and established their rule without indulging in religious persecutions at least in this region. The inscriptions of Jagatu, a place not very far from Ghazni are Buddhist by nature and written in Huna or Hepthalite script, now called 'Bactrian Greek Cursive Script'. They are dated to the end of 5th century A.D. or about the middle of 6th century A.D. Out of the two inscriptions, one speaks about Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha (the *Traratna*) in adoration, (as, *Namo Buddhāya, Namo Dharmāya* and *Namo Saṅghāya*).[1] These epigraphic records well testify to the fact that Buddhism was in a flourishing state during the Hunas or Hepthalites rule there.

Tapa Sardar at Ghazni Proper

A very interesting and conspicuous Buddhist site has been discovered in Ghazni itself, presently called 'Tapa-i-Sardar', located on a hillock which rises abruptly from the plain of Dast-i-Manara. This mound is also called *Tapa-i-Nagāṛā* or the ' Stūpa of Battle-drum' for being traditionally known as the place from where the announcement of military expeditions were made by beating the *Nagāṛā* or battle drum. Yet another name of the place is also known as *But-han* or *But-khan*. This name is significant as it denotes to its connotation, related to Buddha. *But-Khan* means 'the place of the Buddha'. A fourth name of the place as *Sabahar* or *Sah-bahar*[2] is equally significant as it denotes to the 'vihāra erected by the king'. It appears that probably the Hindu Shahis of Kabul either added some buildings or extended special patronage to this vihāra, and hence it got the name as Sah-behar' or 'Sabehar', suggesting their association with it. Some scholars have ventured to suggest that Sahbehar may have had a temple where the image of the king was installed and worshipped by the people, and hence this name.[3] Obviously it is rather a farfetched inference. Some have connected Shah-behar with the

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1. See : Scarrato, U. : "A Note on Some Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Gangatu," *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-17, pp.- 11-24; Humbachi, H. : "Two Inscriptions in Graeco-Bactrian Cursive Script from Afghanistan," *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26; Allchin & Hammond : *Op. cit.*, pp. 243-244.
2. Taddei, Maurizio : "Tapa Sardar, First Preliminary Report," *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-18, p.-109.
3. *Ibid.*, 110.

term 'Rājāvihāra', i.e. a monastery dedicated by the king, simply because *Sah* means king.[1] But evidently there is no logical semblance between the terms *Sah* and *Rājā* and also that both the terms belong to different languages, of course, meaning is the same. It should be noted that in the process of transformation of a term, the phonetic semblance is always apparent with the term, sometimes remotely. To derive Sahbehar from the term *Rājāvihāra* appears rather untenable.

As a matter of fact the excavated site of Tapa Sardar exhibits a grand vihāra covering a large area. The antiquities and other monuments that have come to our notice show that it was one the most important monastic establishments of Ghazni, probably patronised by the rulers of the country. It was a full-fledged *Ārāma,* comprising a number of vihāras, stūpas etc. This ancient Buddhist site has not yet been completely excavated; but at the very look, its grandeur is impressive. The excavated portion of the mound has exhibited a group of ruins - a large stūpa, a row of votive stūpas and thrones and the shrines containing the images of the Buddha, the stucco figures of Buddha and other divinities. In the centre of the main stupa, a reliquary has been noticed.[2] The presence of numerous votive stūpas around the main stūpa and around the large vihāra indicates that it should have contained some sacred relics of the Buddha or of some Buddhist Arhat or saint. Usually a *Saririka* stūpa or corporeal relic stūpa is surrounded by votive stūpas erected as 'offerings' by the devotees. While the other types of stūpas such as *Pāribhogika* or *Uddesika* do not have any votive stupas around them.[3] The presence of a reliquary chamber and also several votive stūpas around the main stūpa of Tapa Sardar indicates that it should have contained some corporeal relics of the Buddha or of some saint. Being a sacred spot it was well-built and plastered which can be seen even today on its lower storey.[4]

Vihāras in Tapa Sardar Area

Ruins of many vihāras have been discovered from this place and they all are well-built. Some of them are decorated. The pebble decoration in the corridor on the back of the vihāra No.-17 is remarkable,[5] which suggests royal support. This vihāra was probably decorated with paintings. A stucco figure of the Buddha is plastered with red clay in order to give the effect of the colour of the robe. Both the side walls of the vihāra show stairs of pale and red ochre colour due to dropping of the paint; but nothing has been found preserved. The vaults and niches or trilobes containing the figures of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas and worshippers were also probably painted.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 110.

[2] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-18, pp. 110-111, fig.-15.

[3] Cf. Dhammarajika stupa at Sarnath and at Taxila. The Caukhandi stupa at Sarnath is an *Uddesika* stupa where no such votive stupas are to be seen.

[4] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-18, Fig.-30, 31, 32.

[5] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-18, p.-112.

The Saṅghārāma of Tapa Sardar was a centre of learning where monk-scholars used to study the Buddhist Śāstras. It is interesting to notice that while excavating the vihāra No.-23, in the corridor, several fragments of manuscripts written on birch bark have been recovered, which yet to be properly deciphered and studied.[2] Some more than two dozen vihāras have been noticed there, indicating that it was a very large Saṅghārāma.

The vihāras of Tapa Sardar are not erected at a time, rather came up slowly during different periods and at intervals as evident from the portions excavated and the antiquities found from them. The upper layer antiquities may be dated to C. 7th or 8th century A.D.[3] But since the lower structure is yet to be excavated and that as the antiquities from the neighbouring places belong to Kuṣāṇa period, we may hope to get some antiquities of this period from here also. It probably rose as a Later Theravāda centre in the beginning and later it became a place of Mahāyāna school. Hiuen-tsiang visited this Saṅghārāma while on his way back home sometime in 645 A.D.. He calls this place *Ho-si-na* or Ghazni, the capital of the country of *Tsu-ku-cha (Tsaukuta)* which extends 7000 *li* in circuit. He also mentions about another capital of the country as *Ho-sa-lo*,[4] which has been identified with Guzanistan on the Helmund.[5] About the people, he says, "Although they worship hundred spirits, yet they also greatly revere the 'three precious ones' (*Triratna* = Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha). There are several hundred Saṅghārāmas with 10,000 or so priests. They all study the Greater Vehicle. The reigning king is a true believer in Buddhism."[6] Hiuen-tsiang also informs that 'some ten stupas were erected by Aśoka in the country.' He also noticed 'several tens of Deva temples, in which the adherents of various systems lived pell-mell, but the *Tirthakas*

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. -117.

[3] *East and West*, N.S. : Vol.-18, p.-120.

[4] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-XII, p.-283; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 264-265.

[5] Watters, T. : *Op. cit.*, p.-265.

[6] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p. 284.

(heretics, non-Buddhists) were in majority.'[1] The account of Hiuen-tsiang clearly indicates that only Mahāyāna form of Buddhism was prevalent in Ghazni during 7th century A.D. He did not notice any vihāra belonging to Hīnayāna school. It appears that, some section of population also followed other religions, probably Saivism or some other religions. Perhaps Hinduism also found some place in this area probably because of the Hindu Sahi-rule. The cult of Durgā or Mahismardini was popularised during the Sahi period as several images of this deity are found in Afghanistan.[2] One figure of Durgā or Mahismardini has also been found from Tapa Sardar, near a Buddha's image. Under what circumstances an image of Durgā could get a place in a Buddhist monastery is difficult to pronounce decisively. Some think that the sanctuary of Tapa Sardar probably belonged to the upper classes and perhaps received royal patronage and so a Hindu deity Durgā could be enshrined in a Buddhist monastery under the influence of Hindu Sahi kings.[3] It is interesting to note that image of Durgā in this vihāra is found just close to the image of the Buddha, which is peculiar. Appearance of a non-Buddhist deity near the image of the Buddha in a vihāra is rather puzzling. It appears that probably the Chief priest was in close touch with the royalty, and he, probably out of his contacts with the king, installed the Durga image to satisfy the religious bias of the king, who was a Hindu.[4] The image appears to have been installed there in late 7th or early 8th century A.D. as evident from other antiquities discovered from this place. Hiuen-tsiang does not mention about it though so, conspicuously placed in the monastery. Some scholars believe that Śaivite pantheon got a place in Buddhist deities, and so, this Durgā figure could appear in the Tapa Sardar monastery.[5] But this view does not appear to be correct as it cannot be conformed with Buddhist traditional sources. In all probability the image of Durgā near the image of the Buddha was installed out of the whim of the Head-Monk who was probably closely associated with the Kabul court. One of the names of Tapa Sardar as

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1. Beal, S. : *Op.cit.*, p.-284; Watters, T. : Op.cit., p.-265.
2. *South Asian Archaeology*, 1971, Teddei, M. : "The Mahismardini Image from Tapa Sardar, Ghazni," p.-207.
3. *Ibid.*, 1971, pp.209-212; *Ibid.*, 1973, p.-115.
4. Was it king Kallar, the founder of Hindu Sahi dynasty? Cf. Mishra, Y. : *The Hindu Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab*, pp. 16-17; Pandey, D.B. : *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab*, p.-335.
5. Cf. *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia* by Simone Gaulier, Robert Zera-Bezard and Monique Mailased, Lieden (1976), part II, p. 51, feg.109,; also see *South Asian Archaeology*, (1971), p. 212.

'Sah-behar' also suggests the association of the Sahi kings of Kabul with this Buddhist monastery.

Tapa Sardar, A Mahāyāna Monastery

It appears that this Saṅghārāma though begun as a Later Tharavada or Hinayana centre, like the other places near Ghazni, that we have seen earlier, probably during the time of Kuṣāṇas, but as time passed, it developed as a Mahāyāna centre. Mahāyāna Buddhism probably became predominant in this area by the beginning of 7th century A.D. Hiuen-tsiang mentions that Mahāyāna was followed by the people of this region.

Several images of Dhyānī Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Devatās, flying *Apsarās* in *Dhotis* and necklaces, large, small and miniature stūpas, the huge image of the Buddha in lying Mahāparinibbāna posture and many other artefacts, all point towards the intense ritualistic aspect of Buddhism, which can be associated mainly with the Mahāyāna school rather than the Hīnayāna. Probably it continued to be a Mahāyāna centre till its end in about 10th or 11th century A.D.

Gudul-i-Ahangaran

Not very far from the town of Ghazni, to the south-west near the citadel, there lies a Buddhist site, presently called Gul-i-Āhangaran, from where several miniature stūpas and some inscribed clay tablets with *Ye-dharmā*......formula have been recovered.[1] It is interesting indeed that another Buddhist place by the same name is located in the Foladi Valley near Bamiyan from where several Buddhist grottoes with paintings and Buddhist images and the 'lantern roofs' have been discovered. We believe that the present name Ahangaran is a derivative of its ancient term *Ārhantanam*, meaning a place of the Arhantas or saints. This place of Ghazni may have been the 'abode' of some great saints or Arhantas.

Proper scientific excavation of this place has yet to be made, but the objects recovered from a sporadic digging in the courtyard of a private family dwelling are interesting. A large number of objects, all of unfired clay are recovered from there. They include several types of miniature stūpas and some inscribed tablets, one tablet bearing the impression of the Buddha in Dhyāna-Mudrā on a lotus throne and some other minor objects. The most interesting objects are the miniature stūpas and the tablets or sealings bearing the full text of the Buddhist

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[1] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-20, Nos-1-2(1970), pp.-70 ff.

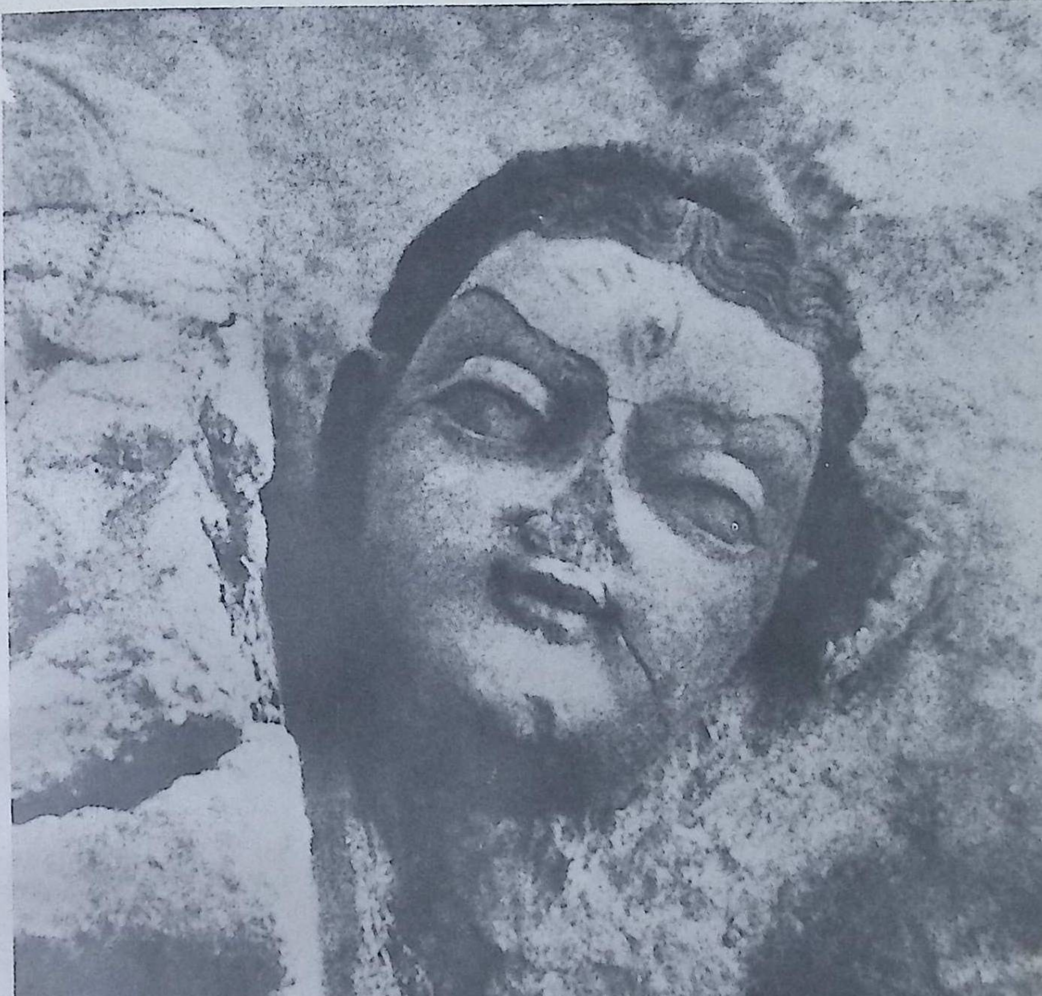

Figure 44 *Ghazni: Tape-sardar:*
Durgā (clay) 10th cent. A.D.

formula, *Ye-Dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣām Tathāgato hyavadat. Teṣām ca yo nirodho evam vādī Mahāśramaṇo ti.*[1] Some of the tablets bear a figure of a stupa and the creed written in late Gupta Brāhmī of about 7th century A.D.[2] It is interesting to point out that by the proliferation of the *Trikāya* theory among the Mahāyāna Buddhists, the worship of a stūpa or an image of the Buddha became rather intense. A stūpa or a figure of the Buddha is regarded as the symbol of the *Sariradhātu* or *Rūpa* or 'body' of the Buddha, while the *Ye dharma........*formula as the *Dharmadhātu* or 'Essence of *Dharma'*, propounded by the Buddha. The Mahāyāna school popularised this formula greatly. We have discovered innumerable Buddhist images bearing this formula, so also many stone stupas, some even in terracottas, have been discovered from many places.[3] It is also interesting to note that the images of the Buddha or the stupas bearing this formula are mostly discovered from the Mahāyāna monasteries, obviously because this school believed in attaining Buddhahood (not Arhathood).

It appears that Gudul-i-Ahangaran was also a place belonging to Mahāyāna school, like Tapa Sardar. Ghazni appears to have become place of Mahāyāna school of Buddhism in later days.

Destruction

Arab attacks on Afghanistan started in second half of seventh century A.D.. The first attempt by Arabs to conquer this country was made in 650 A.D. It was in the time of Caliph Muawiah (661-680 A.D.) when Kabul was subjugated; but soon it attained its independence and the Arab Governor was removed by Ratbil. But Arabs did not abandon their plans and made further attempts to fulfil their ambition as to conquer even India. They made attacks after attacks on Afghanistan; and finally by the end of 9th century A.D. they became successful in establishing their sway over Afghanistan. They not only established their rule over the country but took some ruthless measures to introduce Islam. They indulged in all sorts of persecusions against the established religion, Buddhism. They razed the vihāras and Buddhist shrines to the ground and made indiscriminate killings of monks. Some monks either fled away or courted sword or were compelled to embrace Islam. The excavated portion of Tapa Sardar has exhibited the burning

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1. *East and West*, N.S.,Vol.-20, Nos.-1-2(1970), pp. 70-86.
2. *Ibid.*, p.-74, figs.-14 & 15.
3. For instance from Nalanda.

signs of the roof and corridor materials.[1] Buddhism suffered tremendously and eventually could not survive again. The curtain loomed large for ever leaving behind nothing but the debris of the Buddhist monastic establishments.

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[1] *East and West*, N.S., Vol.-18, Nos.-1-2(1968), p.-112.

10

HAIBAK (AIBAK) or SAMANGAN
The Great Monolith Stūpa

Haibak (Aibak) or Samangan is famous for a monolithic stūpa hewn out a rock and also for some beautifully carved Buddhist monastic caves. Haibak is situated on the high road going to Mazar-i-Sharif, some 326 kms. north-west of Kabul. Its ancient name is Samangan and still known to the people by this name. In accordance with the policy of reviving the ancient names, the whole province is presently called by this name, Samangan, in the government records.

The name Samangan, is obviously derived from the term *Samanagāma* (Sanskrit : *Śramanagrāma)*, meaning the '*Village of Samana*' or the Buddhist monk. *Samaṇa* may indicate *Mahāsamaṇa*, an honorific name of the Buddha. Probably because of the corporeal relic of the Buddha enshrined in this great monolithic stūpa of Haibak, the place came to be known as Samaṇagāma. Some believe that the place got its name as *Samangan* meaning 'cave-dwellers' in a dialect of Uzbek.[1] But this does not appear to be a feasible interpretation. We however find reference to its ancient name as Samaṇagāma prevalent even in 630 A.D. when Hiuen-tsiang passing through this place calls it *'Sih-min-kien'* (Samanagāma).[2] The Arab geographers, in later centuries also call it *Siminhan* and include it as one of the large cities of the area. In 14th century A.D. the Chronoclers of Tamerlane also call it by the same name - *'Saminkan'*,[3] obviously *Saminhan* or *Siminkan* as the different vocal forms of *Samanagāma*.

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, p.-21.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-I, p.-21; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-106:

[3] Dupree N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, pp. 21-22; Cf. Admec L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-4, p.-43.

It is interesting to note that the term *Samana* is exclusively used for the Buddhist and Jain mendicants. In Asokan edicts, the Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa terms often occur together as these were the two main groups of religionists of ancient India. In Pali texts, Buddha is honorifically called by the name *Mahāsamaṇa*, and non-Buddhists generally call him by the term *Samaṇa* only. In Buddhist ecclesiastical terminology, a newly ordained monk who has received only *Pabbajjā* (first ordination), not the *Upasampadā* (or Higher ordination), is usually designated as *Sāmaṇera* (novice). But, in general, the Buddhist monks are usually designated as *Samaṇa*, so also, the Jain monks. In south India, near Mysore in Karnataka State, a place where the famous tallest Jain image of Gomateśvara stands, is known as 'Srāvaṇa Velgoḷa' or 'Sramaṇa Velgola', meaning the 'Hill of Sramaṇa'. Samangan is a similar derivative of Sramaṇagrāma or Samaṇagāma, a self-interpretative term, exactly as some villages in Afghanistan which are still called by their ancient names, such as Begram, meaning *Vihāragrāma*, Nangarahar for *Nagaravihāra*.

Takht-i-Rustam

Two kilometers south of the modern town Haibak or Samangan on the spur of the hills, there are the remains of five caves and the great monolithic stūpa situated on the summit of the hill. The local people call it 'Takht-i-Rustam' (or Rustam's Throne).[1]

This ṣite was first discovered by Captain Talbot and Major C.E. Yate, the Members of British Boundary Commission in 1886 and 1888 respectively. The actual scientific exploration was however done by Mr. Foucher of the Delegation of French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan (D.A.F.A.) in 1923 and he has since published the Reports on it.[2]

The Monastic Caves

There are altogether five big caves which form the monastic complex, carved out just on the below of the spur. It is an *Ārāma*, comprising small and big apartments for different monastic purposes including a shrine hall, a dormitory, rooms for bath and the living

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[1] Rustam being a favourite Iranian epic hero of Firdausi's-*Shahanama*, a book of Kings, who is said to have married Tahamina, the daughter of the prince of Samangan. We find a number of places called Takht-i-Rustam or Tapa-i-Rustam in Afghanistan for this name being familiar in local myths. See : *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Lieden & London (1965), Vol.-II, p.-981 ff.

[2] See the latest archaeological report of Prof. Mizuno : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, Kyoto (1962).

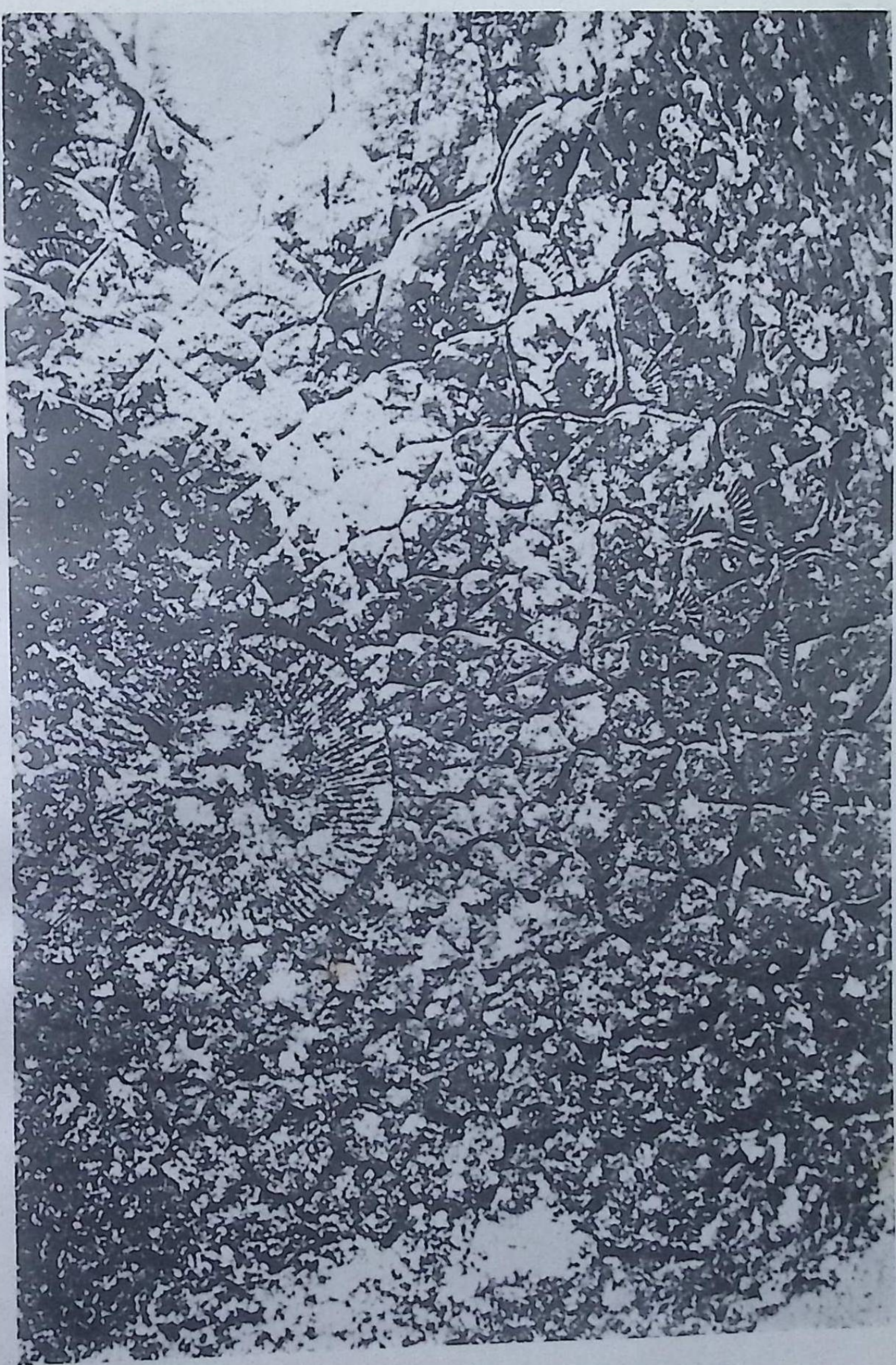

Figure 45 *Haibak:*
Full Lotus-carving under the ceiling.

rooms. The very first cave, No.-1 is of some interest. It has an anteroom, measuring 8x11 mtrs; and the main room is round and domed, measuring 10.5 mtrs. across and 10.80 mtrs. high. There exist two niches on the back wall, one above the other, which once contained the stucco images of Buddha or other deities, now no remains of them are available. The other object of interest in the cave is a single large lotus flower in full blown, perhaps the largest found in any cave, carved out into the domed ceiling. This cave was probably the *Upaṭṭhānasālā* meant for the guests and also for meeting purposes.

The next cave (No.-2) is obviously meant for living purposes. It has two entrances with steps down into a long corridor or passage with vaulted ceiling measuring 12 mtrs. in length. There is a rectangular room on the left side measuring 5x2.50 mtrs. and at the end there is another room measuring 1.50 mtrs. by 3 mtrs.. Along the wall of the front corridor there is a long bench, probably meant for reclining or sleeping. Because of several apartments, villagers call it *'bazar'* although they served as living cells.

The next cave (No.-3) is a shrine room which is vaulted and where exists a large niche for the statue of the Buddha. It is quite large, measuring 6 mtrs. by 13.50 mtrs. Side walls also have niches. The platform of the niches suggest that once they were embellished with stucco figures, now completely disappeared.

The No.-4 cave is rather complicated in construction, comprising four rooms. There are two entrances. Behind the middle room, the room probably served as living cells. The middle room has a continuous bench on three sides. In the centre of the floor, there is a small tank, 1.60 mtr. square and 1.80 mtr. deep. Villagers call it 'bath room' *(Hammam)*, which appears to be correct as a conduit is visible to pass the water through the next room (cave No.-5). The cave No.-5 has a peculiar construction and some believe it to be a lavatory or a steam-bath *(Jantāghara)*.[1]

The Great Monolithic Stūpa

Across the vihāra complex, on the summit of the hill a large monolithic stūpa is hewn out of the solid rock. It is an unparallel stūpa both in size and also in construction. It was probably the holiest place of this monastic establishment; and so, before we approach the stūpa. at each end of the outside wall is a square hole dug into the ground level rock. These holes were dug to support the *stambhas* or pillars meant for indicating it a 'holy spot'.[1] There is an entrance-tunnel, about 17 mtrs. long with flat ceiling. Emerging from this tunnel, the dome of the stūpa appears in open sky. The stūpa appears as if sunk into a large pit but it stands in open sky and its surrounding rock, except northernside, has been cut out in order to make the summit visible. As usual the stūpa has a parambulatory path or *Pradkṣiṇāpatha* of about 2 mtrs. wide. It may not be out of place to mention that a stūpa containing the holy corporeal relics of the Buddha or some other holy person, is usually known as *Sārīrika stūpa*, (others are *Uddeśika* and *Paribhogika* stūpas) is invariably provided with a parambulatory path in order to perform *Pradakṣiṇā* rite by the devotees by going round keeping the stūpa to the right for accruing merit.[2] This stūpa probably contained some holy relic, very likely of the Buddha, as is evident from the reliquary room carved out in the centre of the *Harmikā* of the stūpa in which the relic was deposited. A *Pradakṣiṇāpatha* is therefore provided for the purpose of going round by the devotees. The dome of the stupa is about 24 mtrs. across and about 8 mtrs. high. On the top of the dome a square *Harmikā*, 8x8 mtrs. in size with three pilasters and a beam on each side, is carved out. On the top of the *Harmikā*, there is a small square dias for the *Chatra*, measuring 2.30 mtrs. square and a round hole in the centre to hold the *Chatra*; but nothing known to the *Chatra*, certainly destroyed by the invaders. In the centre of the *Harmikā*, there is a neatly cut, round and domed room with an entrance. This was the sacred room to contain the holy relics. Unfortunately nothing has been recovered from there; but it certainly contained the holy relics of Gotama Samaṇa, the Buddha. In this context it may be of some interest to mention a Kharosti inscription engraved on the lid of a brass casket, found by Charles Masson who sent it to England among other antiquities without mentioning its find-spot. The inscription refers to the deposit of the relics of the Buddha. It is read by Sten Konow as the following[3]: "*Sam 18 masaye Arthamisiya sasṭehi 10 is (e) kṣuṇamm(r)i Gotamasamaṇasa Śarira paristavida.*" (Translation - "Anno 18, in the month Artemisios, when 10 (days) had appeared, at this term the Sramana Gotama relic was enshrined."). The inscription appears to be of some importance as it refers to Budhha's relic casket. Firstly, it is the only relic casket-inscription which mentions the name of Gotama along with his appellation,

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[1] For details see : Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, Kyoto (1960) pp. 86-89. For the *Jantāghara*, See : Upasak, C.S. : *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, pp. 98-99.

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[1] Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, Kyoto (1960), pp. 89-90.
[2] Konow, Sten : *C.I.I.*, Vol.-II, Pt.-I, p.-152.
[3] Ibid.

Śramaṇa. Secondly, it does not mention the name of the donor responsible for the casket as usually noticed at other places. It only mentions that 'the relic was enshrined' *(paristhavida),* obviously in a stūpa. And lastly, it gives the exact date of its deposit, which comes to 20th April, 146 A.D..

Haibak is the only place which still retains 'its old' name as *Śrāmaṇagrāma* in Afghanistan; while other place-names ending with *grāma* are combined with a *vihāra,* such as *Vihāragrāma* or Begram, already referred to above. May we presume that this relic casket was actually found from this stūpa of Samangan by Chales Masson; and since nothing worth as treasure was recovered by him, and as, he being a treasure hunter, simply dumped this casket with other antiquities and sent it to England without putting any note about it. It is also likely that he might have got it from some local person from there and considering it as insignificant, despatched to England unnoticed. Whatever may be the fact, this relic-casket was deposited in a stūpa, if not here, somewhere in Afghanistan, in early Christian Era, as dated, 20th April, 146 A.D., enshrined during the Kuṣāṇa's rule, probably during Kaniska's reign. We believe, this stupa of Samangan was probably carved out during his reign. The Japanese Archaeological team found some pot-sherds from one of the monk-cells outside the stūpa, a begging bowl of fine red pottery which is attributed to Kusana period by Professor Mizuno.[1] It is very probable that in the beginning the stūpa, the side rooms and the hall near the stūpa in the entrance tunnel were carved out and some monks started dwelling there as the custodians of the relics deposited in the stupa. In course of time when many more monks gathered there, the other caves for them were later constructed at the foot of the spur. Professor Mizuno thinks that Cave No.-3 may be the earliest among the five caves as it occupies the centre from where a fine view of the stūpa is available. According to him the date of the caves may be ascribed to 4th or 5th century A.D.[2] It may be dated even earlier as we find arch in the ceiling, usually connected with the Sassanian art of 2nd or 3rd century A.D.

Samangan, A Hīnayāna Centre

We have observed above that the stūpa of Samangan may have been erected during the Kuṣāṇas, probably during Kaniṣka's period, who was the follower of Later Theravāda or Hīnayāna school of

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[1] Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast,* Kyoto (1960), p.-91.
[2] Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast,* Kyoto (1960), p.-91.

Buddhism. We know from Hiuen-tsiang's records that Balkh and Kunduz were the strongholds of Later Theravada Buddhism. Samangan, being not too far away from these places, might have developed as a Hīnayāna centre. Hiuen-tsiang passed through Samangan and did not halt there, probably because it being a centre of Hīnayāna school and he being a Mahāyanī did not intend to visit this monastery. To our great disappointment neither any ancient text nor any archaeological written object referring to this place has yet been recovered which can throw some light on its history. We can only depend on our imagination or guess to know anything about the history of Buddhism of this important place. We have however drawn some inferences above in this context.

Hazar Sum

About 15 kms. away south-west of Haibak lies a cluster of caves called Hazar Sum, meaning 'Thousand Caves'. At present some 200 caves are found there dug in the hill, some of them were probably two storeyed. They are arranged in groups and each cave has one to three rooms. Usually, in the centre of the main room, on the back wall a niche is found and also on the side walls the ante-rooms. Low benches are also noticed in some of the caves. It is remarkable to note that from here neither any stūpa nor any statue of the Buddha or of any other deities have been found. And so, some, for being it devoid of any positive material which may be Buddhist, do not regard them as Buddhist caves. But the benches along the three side-walls found in some caves, may be compared with the benches found in the Buddhist caves of Foladi valley, near Bamiyan. It is likely that they might have been excavated for the abodes of the Buddhist monks. Ultimately they were occupied by the villagers during Islamic period.

In all probability, we feel that Hazar Sum was a Buddhist monastic complex, especially meant for those monks who were exclusively devoted to Buddhist meditational and other spiritual practices. Being a solitary place it developed as an ideal centre for those *Āraññaka* monks, who preferred to dwell in the forest' or on the mountain. It appears that while Samangan or Takht-i-Rustam served as the 'abode' of those monks who were mainly interested in religious rites and in learning the religious scriptures, Hazar Sum was the residence of those saints and practitioner who preferred to engage themselves in meditation and asceticism or the *Dhutaṅgas*.

Destruction of Haibak

Some think that this monastic complex ceased to function on account of the invasion of Hephthalites or Hūṇas in about 460 A.D.[1] as no antiquity from here could be ascribed beyond to this date. We have also no records whatsoever which can place it to a date later than this. A. Foucher is of the opinion that the stūpa is incomplete and its excavations had to be stopped on account of Hephthalite's invasion.[2] But his guess is mainly based on architectural stand-point and so not acceptable to many. The stūpa is almost complete with its chamber, dome containing the relics within. It is possible that it might have been the target of the Hūṇas who ransacked it thoroughly and brought some set back, but whether it came to a complete stop is difficult to say. Hunas might have plundered the town and looted the riches accumulated in the monastery but whether they made any persecutions against Buddhism is doubtful. It is very likely that the Hūṇas made Samangan town as their military base for sometime for further invasions and then the vihāras and other monastic establishments might have received some damage and religious life then might have become rather dull. Probably, since then it could not flourish as before and lost its previous importance and so Hiuen-tsiang simply passed through it without recording anything about it in his accounts. We believe that its final destruction took place only when the Arabs invaded it sometime in 10th or 11th century A.D., as was the fate of other Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan.

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1. Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, Kyoto (1960), p.-92.
2. *Ibid*.

11

SURKH KOTAL AND ITS ENVIRONMENTS

1. Surkh Kotal

Shurlkh Kotal, from where the Kuṣāṇas' royal dynastic shrine has been excavated is situated at a distance about 250 kms. from Kabul, 16 kms. from Pul-i-Khumri, the ancient Baghlan on the high road to Mazar-i-Sharif. The place has revealed the ruins of temples, fire alters, the sanctuary of the Kuṣāṇa kings, several inscriptions in Greek script (as used on the coins of the Kuṣāṇas) and in Iranian language, stucco figures and stone images etc. One of the inscriptions describes the sanctuary as 'Kaniṣka Oanindo (Niketor) Sanctuary'. It also refers to *Bagolango* as the name of the temple or the sanctuary, after which the whole area is called Baghlan by the medieval geographers. The inscription also states that the temple was built by Kaniṣka, the Great Buddhist king of Kuṣāṇas and that it was restored by an official Nokonzoko by name. Numerous coins were found from the fire-burnt debris in the walls surrounding the temple chamber belonging to the reign of Huviska, the immediate successor of Kaniṣka. It appears that some fire took place during Huviska's period, and the temple may be of about 2nd century A.D.[1] Some are of the opinion that the temple was of Zoroastrian faith, while others believe it to be mainly a dynastic temple of the Kuṣāṇas, who developed an unique mixed culture by amalgamating the main elements of Greek, Central Asian, Iranian and Indian cultural traditions.[2] Whatever may have been the nature of worship at this temple, there is no doubt that the Surkh Kotal temple is a non-Buddhist one. We have however discovered a headless statue

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, pp. 15-16.

[2] *Ibid*. p.-18.

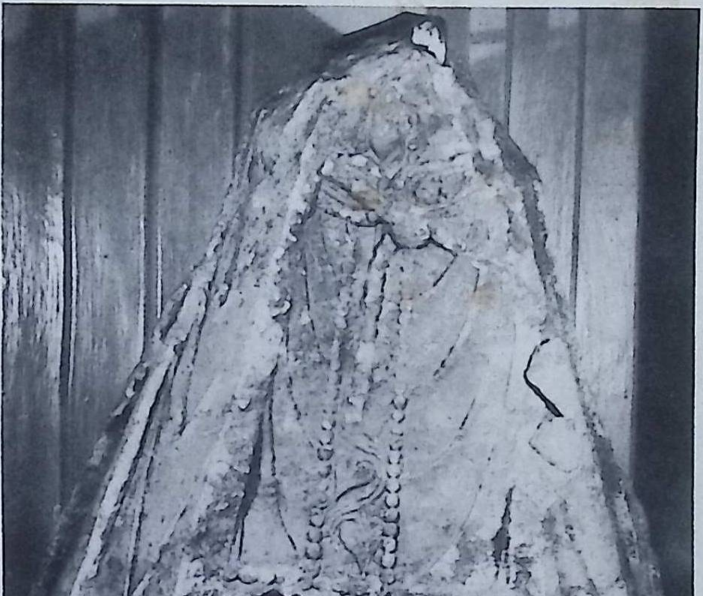

Figure 46 *Surk Kotal:*
Headless figure of kaniska (stone) (Kabul Museum).

of Kaniṣka from here almost similar to one found from Mathura, now kept in Kabul Museum.

Kaniṣka is noted for his patronage to Buddhism, but his Surkh Kotal temple is an example of his religious tolerance that he pursued throughout his life. His sympathy and regard to all the religions in his kingdom is also manifested by his coins which bear the deities of different faiths, including the figure of the Buddha. Some thirty three gods and goddesses belonging to Indian, Greek or Iranian pantheons are noticed on his coin-types. The Surkh Kotal temple is another illustration of his religious policy. He has shown full regard to his family divinity by erecting this temple, probably dedicated to fire-cult, as followed and practised traditionally in his family, although he personally believed in Buddhism.

A Buddhist Site Near Surkh Kotal

Surkh Kotal, being an important sacred place of the Kuṣāṇa family, received support from Kaniska also, but his faith to Buddhism remained unabated. During his time Buddhism was in its heyday in Afghanistan and so some Buddhist centres also existed in this area. About two kms. from the main temple of Surkh Kotal an ancient square platform has been discovered. The platform is adorned with forty pilasters. The platform certainly supported a colossal statue of Buddha and other Buddhist deities. Presently out of forty pilasters only twenty five are preserved, twenty four of them bear little busts. These busts cannot be definitely ascribed to be Buddhist; but one of them is adorned with a turban, a favourite symbol of Bodhisattva in Gandhāra art.[1] The busts may be of Buddhist deities although yet to be finally identified. It appears that the platform adorned with pilasters are the parts of some Buddhist shrine that once existed there.

Baghlan

A few miles north-west from Surkh Kotal is situated the modern town of Baghlan which was a place of Buddhist importance. Many Buddhist sculptures belonging to Kuṣāṇa period have been discovered from here by the French Archaeologists. These sculptures include a scene depicting the Great Departure of Siddhārtha on a lime stone. Queen Yaśodhāra is seen lying on a high couch and Chandaka is seen

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1. Schlumberger, Daniel : "Excavations at Surkh Kotal," Published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol.-XLVII, pp. 77-95; Also see : Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, p.-17.

standing.[1] Yet another piece of stone relief presents Siddhārtha in full dress. Many mounds can still be seen on both sides of the road when we proceed from Pul-i-Khumri to Kunduz by road. In Baghlan the governor's office was built on the top of a mound, which was once a stūpa of Kuṣāṇa period. Many artefacts of this period were recovered from this mound while digging the foundation of this building.[2] It leaves no doubt that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition here during the Kuṣāṇa's rule, in 1st or 2nd century A.D.

Sham Qala or Cham Qala

Another Buddhist site near Baghlan of Kuṣāṇa period is located at a place called Sham Qala or Cham Qala. From here numerous Buddhist antiquities have been discovered by the French Archaeologists who made an exploration of this place. It was a monastic area as evident by the remains there. The monastery might have come into existence in early Christian era,[3] probably during Kaniska's rule. Sham Qala may be a diminutive of *Śamana* or *Śramaṇa* now coupled with *Qala* or 'fort' on account of a mound there.

Qunduz or Kunduz

It is one of the principal towns of Afghanistan, 347 kms. away north-east from Kabul, about 49 kms. from the Oxus or Amu Dariya. It is situated on the eastern bank of the Qunduz river. The history of this town goes back to 6th century B.C. when it was captured by Darius I, the Achaeminid emperor. It was also conquered by Alexander the Great in 4th century B.C.. The Mauryan empire probably did not extend up to this place, but several punch-marked coins have been discovered from here,[4] which belong to this period. They probably reached there through the traders. The Kuṣāṇas, particularly Kaniṣka, certainly ruled over this region. Several sculptures and coins of this period have been recovered from this place. If one passes by road from Baghlan to Kunduz, he finds many mounds on both the sides of the road, each of early Kuṣāṇa habitation. Though surveyed by the archaeologists, none of the mounds have been properly excavated. Only some mounds of

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1. *M.D.A.F.,A.*, Vol.-XIX-*Monuments Preislamique de Afghanistan*, Paris (1964)- *Sculptures de Bactrine* by Bruno Dagens, p.-36, Plate-XXIII.1.
2. Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, Kabul (1967), p.-100.
3. *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-XIX, Paris (1964), Bruno Dagens, pp. 37-39.
4. A hoard of coins was found from Kunduz which contained 679 Indian and Indo-Greek silver coins from a place called Ai Khanun in 1970, out of which 673 were Punch-marked coins of Mauryan period. Allchin, F.R. and Hammond, N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-208.

Kunduz have been partially excavated from where several artefacts of Kuṣāṇa period have been discovered. The town suffered much damage due to the Hephthalites' or Hūnas' attack; but Buddhism continued to flourish there for several centuries after. Hiuen-tsiang visited this place and has left records about it, the only written account about Buddhism in Kunuz. He calls it by its ancient name *Huoh.*[1] He noticed that the majority of the people were following Buddhism. There were more than ten Saṅghārāmas with several hundreds of monks dwelling there. They studied the Śāstras of both the Great and Little Vehicles of Buddhism and practised the 'Discipline' of both.[2] This account of Hiuen-tsiang is evident enough to warrant that even after the attack of the Hunas Buddhism flourished in this region.

A few excavations have been carried out around the modern town of Kunduz. Some Buddhist antiquities have also been recovered from them. There are many sites yet to be explored; and if and when full exploration is made, we may expect some new Buddhist finds. A mud-brick monastery of Indo-Sassanian period has also been discovered. There, some reliefs were recovered from the ruins of this monastery; and they depict a Boddhisattva and Buddhas with worshippers in kneeling or standing postures. The upper part of the friezes illustrates the scenes from the life of the Buddha, including Prince Siddhārtha's youth and early training; the well-known four encounters with an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a recluse; and the Great Departure from Kapilavastu.[3] All these sculptures belong to Kuṣāṇa period and may be placed in 2nd century A.D.

It is conspicuous to note that when Hiuen-tsiang visited Kunduz, both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna schools were followed and practised by the people. The antiquities found from there are though scanty, Buddhism appears to have continued as the Religion of the people for several centuries after, till the advent of the Arabs in 10 or 11th century A.D., the period of final disappearance of Buddhism from Afghanistan.

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1. Klaus Fischer has pointed out its ancient name as '*Orapsk*' See : *Artibus Asiae,* Vol.-XXI, p.-232.
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* Bk.-XII, p.-288; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang,* p.-270.
3. Fischer, Klaus : "Gandharan Sculptures from Kunduz and Environs" : *Artibus ASiae,* Vol.-XXI, pp. 252-253; also see : *M.D.A.F.A.,* Vol.-XIX, p.-39.

Angur Tapa

A mound, 3 kms. north-east of Kunduz is noticed which is locally called Angur Tapa. It is a monastery site from where several Buddhist stucco figures were recovered. The antiquities show that it was established as early as 2nd century A.D. and probably continued to flourish till the time of Hiuen-tsiang in 630 A.D .

Chaqalaq Tapa

At about 11 kms. away to south-east from Kunduz was situated a monastery, now called Chaqalaq Tapa, on the opposite side of the Kunduz river. There are a number of Buddhist mounds, locally called *Tapa* (Skt. *stūpa*) in and around this place.[1] They are probably the ancient monastic establishments, some mounds were excavated by the Japanese archaeologists. Several Buddhist antiquities were found from there which include the heads of the Buddha in stone, a small seated Buddha, probably Maintreya Bodhisattva and his worshippers and some such other objects. These antiquities may be of the Kuṣāṇa period, datable from first to third century A.D.,[2] the heyday of Buddhism in the region.

Durman Tapa

The Durman Tapa is not far from Chaqalaq Tapa, about 12 kms. south-west of Kunduz, on the other bank of the Kunduz river. The Japanese archaeologists have excavated a mound there, which indicates a Buddhist monastery. The Durman Tapa has yielded only few objects of Buddhist interest. The antiquities found from there include three Buddhist stucco heads, one is the head of a female worshipper and the other is the head of a male worshipper and the third is the head of a Buddhist monk. The foot-prints on terracottas found from there are supposed to be the foot-prints of the Buddha.[3] As many as 13 rooms have been unearthed from this site and they belong to different periods; but none appears to be the monastic cell definitely. It may be the ruins of an ancient monastery. The walls are either mud brick built or mud block built and probably so, the monastery could not survive for long. For this very reason no Buddhist objects could be recovered. But the other *'Tapas'* or mounds around there may be the Buddhist monastic sites; and if and when excavated, they may yield some antiquities of Buddhist nature. No doubt this area was full of

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1. Mizuno, S. : *Chaqlaq Tepe*, Kyoto (1970), p.-3.
2. *Ibid*, p.-4.
3. Mizuno, S. : *Durman Tepe and Lalma*, Kyoto (1968), pp. 104-105.

Buddhist monasteries, as it lay on the caravan route to Central Asia. The Oxus river served as a great navigatory passage for the traders. It was the usual practice of the Buddhist monks to wander from one place to another along with the caravans (*Satthavāha*) and they traversed long journeys. The monks used to stay in the monasteries near the town where these caravan traders (*Satthavāhas*) stopped for the sale or purchase of goods. It is interesting to note that Buddhist monasteries used to have provisions for the guest-monks. We find special rules in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* for the guest-monks visiting any other monastery.[1] Kunduz being a business centre, caravans from many places used to stop for their business and so, the monks traveling with them used to occupy the monasteries for some time as guests. Hiuen-tsiang was also greeted in all the monasteries in Kunduz as a special guest.

Kunduz was known to many countries and Buddhist monks used to visit this place when coming from far countries on way to Central Asia or when back. Buddhism flourished in this area for several centuries. Kunduz however could not gain so much popularity or importance as Kapiśa or Bamiyan in the Buddhist world, but it remained as an important Buddhist country in northern Afghanistan for a long time.

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1. Cf. *Agantukavatthu*. See : Upasak, C.S. : *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, p.-25; also see : *Cullavagga* (Nalanda), pp. 311-314.

12

BALKH or BĀLHĪKA (BACTRIA) Place of Early Buddhism

Balkh is one of the oldest towns in Afghanistan, rather in the world. It was probably built by the Aryans who first settled there. Balkh is also reputed for being the birth-place of Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroasterism, a religion which is still followed and practised by Parsees in India and by some tribes in Persia.[1] Zoroaster's date is not yet finally decided but usually estimated between C. 1000 - 600 B.C . According to Zoroasterian tradition, Balkh was built by the first Aryan ruler, 'Bakhdi'; and the place got its name after him. It is described in the *Avesta,* the Canon of the Zoroasterism, as a 'beautiful town crowned with banners'. The ancient Greek historians call it 'Bactra' or 'Baktra' or 'Bactria'; and the whole country 'Bactriana', which had been located between the Hindu Kush range and the river Oxus or Vaṃksu (Amu Dariya).[2] The town is also known from the ancient cuneiform inscriptions of Persia as 'Bakhtri', from which it has since become Balkh. The Greeks however adopted the western Persian form as 'Baktra'[3] and called it Bactria. Balkh is also known to ancient Indian literature and inscriptions where it is called 'Bālhika' or 'Vālhīka' or 'Bāhīka'. According to some ancient Indian texts the country of Valhika was situated between the Sutlej and Indus rivers in Punjab.[4] In the Islamic tradition, Balkh is said to have been founded by 'Balkh-ibn-Saman'. The prosperity and magnificence of this town impressed the Arabs so much that they called it 'Mother of Cities'

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1. *Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics,* Vol.-XII (1961), p.-862.
2. Dupree, N.H. : *Road to Balkh,* Kabul (1967), p.-63.
3. *Enc. of Buddhism,* Vol.-II, p.-487-488.
4. Dey, N.L. : *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Med. India* (1971), p.-15, 19; Cf. *Amarakosa,* 3-3-9; 3-5-32; 2-8-45; 2-6-124, 2-9-40.

(*Oumm-ul-belad*).[1] Probably no site in Afghanistan surpasses Balkh, the ancient Bactria, the 'mother of cities' in its appeal. Here the main ancient trade-routes met, one from Central Asia and China, and one from Mediterranean in the west and the other from India in the East. Trade and commerce at Balkh was rather brisk, and it acted as a 'trade exchange centre' of the East and West.

Presently, Balkh is the name of a small townlet, in which the ruins of ancient Bactria, the capital of Bactriana, are scattered. It is situated in north-central Afghanistan; and the province is also designated by the same name. It is bounded in the west by Jowzjan, in the south by Ghor and Bamiyan, and in the east by Samangan provinces, in the north by the Soviet Union. The present capital of Balkh province is Mazar-i-Sharif.[2]

Alexander the Great and Balkh

Alexander the Great plundered and pillaged and captured Balkh in about 329 B.C. It is recorded by the Greek historians that prior to Alexander's occupation, Bactria, 'the pride of Ariana', 'the Glory of Persia' was ruled by one Persian cavalry commander Bessus by name who had settled himself there as the new emperor by killing Darius-III, the last Achaemenid emperor of Persia. Alexander the Great attacked this town in the spring of 329 B.C. and the Persian Satrap, Bessus was captured and killed. Alexander is said to have spent two years in this area; and Balkh is also traditionally considered to have witnessed the marriage of Alexander with Roxane, the daughter of Bactrian Chief. After establishing his firm rule over this area, Alexander took a march to the East, to India, where to his utter disappointment, his troops refused to march beyond the Indus and ultimately he had to give up his further campaigns and to return home. Unfortunately he met with a tragic end on way back home and died at Babylon in 323 B.C. Following his sudden death with no issue to succeed, fights began among his military generals for the share of his vast dominion that he had acquired by conquering a number of countries. This war of succession resulted in establishing a separate Graeco-Bactrian dynasty at Balkh or Bactria. Here ruled many kings of this dynasty, including Demetrius and perhaps the Buddhist convert Menander (Milinda of the Pali text, the *Milindapañho*) who issued coins, strictly Bactrian in origin and Attic in standard which also influenced the ancient coinage of India for well nigh two centuries (1st and 2nd century A.D.). Balkh, became a 'sub-centre' of Greek culture, art, architecture and traditions for some time.

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[1] Adamec, L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-IV, p.98.

[2] *Ibid.*, 98.

First Message of Buddha in Balkh

Perhaps, much before the attack and rule of Alexander the Great, the seed of Buddhism had been sown in this area through the touring merchants who had trade relations with Indian sub-continent in the East on one hand and Central Asia and China on the other in the West. As a matter of fact, these touring merchants acted as *liaison* between the countries that they traversed in connection with their business and carried with them the news of the events of cultural and political importance.

We have mentioned elsewhere the story of two brothers Tapassu and Bhallika occurring in many Pali texts[1] and also in some Buddhist Sanskrit texts,[2] in which it is related that they, while coming from Ukkala country, called on the Buddha who was then enjoying the 'Bliss of Enlightenment' under the Rājāyatana tree at Bodh Gaya in the eighth week after His Enlightenment. The *Mahāvagga*, an early text of the Pali Vinaya Piṭaka, mentions that they offered *Madhugoḷaka* (or *Madhupiṇḍika* or sweet-ball, probably prepared out of dry fruits as to be used for a long time when on journey) to the Buddha. This was the first morsel that the Buddha took after his Enlightenment. On this occasion the Buddha preached them and after preach, they entreated the Buddha to accept them as his *Upāsakas* or lay-devotees. The Buddha thereupon gave his consent and they, by undergoing the two 'refuges' *(Saraṇāni)* of the Buddha and the Dhamma (not Saṅgha as it was yet to be formed), became the '*First Upāsakas* in the world'. The *Anguttaranikaya Aṭṭhakathā* (Commentary) further adds that the Buddha on their request gave them 'eight handfuls of his hair' (or eight hairs only), which they took for worship and built Cetiyas or stūpas over them in their own town, Asitanjana, on its city-gate. They are said to be brothers, Bhallika being younger. Asitanjana is described as the capital of Kaṃsa or Kaṃsabhoga country, a division of the Uttarāpatha.[3] According to the *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* these two brothers are the sons of a caravan leader *(Satthavāha)* of

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1. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda), pp. 5-6, *Aṅguttaranikāya* (Nalanda), p.-26; *Aṅguttaranikayā Atṭhakathā*, (Nalanda), p.-401 ff; *Jāṭaka*, I, 80.
2. *Lalitavistara* (Mithila), p.-381 ff.; *Divyavadana* (Mithila), XXVII, p.-25 ff. , *Mahāvastu*, III, 303 ff. etc.
3. *Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (P.T.S.), I, p.-207.

Pokkharavatī town.[1] Pokkharavatī was the earliest capital of Gandhāra; and was a great business centre. It has been identified with modern Charsadda, near Peshawar in Pakistan. As a matter of fact it appears that their birth town was Asitañjana, as mentioned in the *Aṅguttara Aṭṭhakathā* and his father probably had his another business centre at Pokkharavatī (Skt. Puskalāvatī), for being it a great business place; and so, the *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* places Tapassu-Bhallika as the sons of a merchant of this town. It is likely that although they were born at Asitañjana in the Kaṃsabhoga country, they also resided at Pokkharavatī along with their father. The country of Kaṃsa or Kaṃsabhoga was situated in the Uttarāpatha[2] which extended as far as Balkh and Samarakand, as supported by many Chinese sources.[3] Asitañjana may have been a town near Balkh, probably a smaller town. It is interesting to note that the *Lalitavistara* [4] and the *Mahāvastu* [5] both describe Tapassu and Bhallika as hailing from the Uttarāpatha.

It may be noted that the accounts found in the *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* mention them as brothers, the sons of a *Satthavāha* or touring merchant, born in the town of Pokkharavatī, and who received the hairs from the Buddha, but it does not inform us about the place where they went after receiving the relics of Tathāgata nor does it mention the erection of the stūpas over it. The *Anguttara-Nikāya-Aṭṭhakathā* is rather more expository on this point and informs that they took these relics to their own town, Asitañjana where they erected a *Cetiya* (or Cetiyaas) on the 'city gate' which emitted 'blue rays' on the Uposatha days.[6]

The legend of Tapassu and Bhallika is also referred to by Hiuen-tsiang when he paid a visit to Balkh in about 630 A.D., which is significant in this context. He records, "To the north-west from the capital (Balkh) about 50 *li* or so we arrive at the town of *Ti-wei* (Tapassu) and 40 *li* to the north of this is the town of *Po-li*

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[1] *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* (P.T.S.), I, p.-48. Pokkharavatī or Pokkharasati or Puṣkalāvati is identified with Charsadda, 18 miles north of Peshawar (Pakistan). It is also called Utpalāvatī in the *Divyāvadana* (Mithila Ed., p.-212); also mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Uttarakanda-101, 114) and Peukeluotis by the Greeks. Cf. A. Cunningham : *A.G.I.*, pp. 41-44; N.L.Dey: *Dictionary of A. & M. India*, p.-163; M. Wheeler : *Charsadda*, pp. 5-6; S. Beal : *Buddhist Records of Western World*, p.-109.

[2] *Jātaka*, IV, 79; *Petavatthu Aṭṭhakathā* (P.T.S., 111; Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-I, p.-467.

[3] Chandra, Lokesh : *Three Iranian Words in the Buddhist Tradition* (New Delhi) (1979), pp. 381-384.

[4] *Lalitavistara*, Chapter-XXIV, Trapassu-Bhallika Parivarta, (Mithila Ed.), pp. 381-384.

[5] *Mahāvastu*; p.-3. 303; also *Divyāvadana*, (Mithila Ed.), p.- 393.

[6] *Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā* (Nalanda), p.- 401 ff.

(Bhallika). In each of this town there is a stūpa of about three *chong* (30 feet) in height. In old days when Buddha first attained Enlightenment after advancing to the 'Tree of Knowledge' (Bodhi Tree) he went to the 'Garden of Deer' (Sarnath), at this time two householders meeting him, offered from their store of provisions for their journey some cakes and honey. The Lord of World, for their sake, preached........ his very first disciples, the five rules of moral conduct (*Pañca Sīla)*......When they heard the sermon, they humbly asked for some object to worship. On this, Tathāgata delivered to them some of his hairs and nail cuttings........ The two men taking the order, each went to his own town, and then, according to the model which the Holy One had prescribed, they prepared to build a monument, this was the very first stūpa of the Buddhist Religion erected."[1] The same story is retold in the *Life of Hiuen-tsiang* without change in substance.[2]

The above account of Hiuen-tsiang stands as a testimony to the fact that Tapassu and Bhallika hailed from a place near Balkh; and their town Asitañjana should have been somewhere near it. The accounts of Hiuen-tsiang have been verily tested and found correct, particularly the distance of the places of his visit.

Another episode of Tapassu and Bhallika is found in the *Theragathā Aṭṭhakathā* in which it is related that they paid a visit to the Buddha once again while he was residing at Rājagaha after promulgating the 'Wheel of Law' in Varanasi. On this occasion they listened to his preachings and thereupon, Tapassu attained the 'Fruit of *Sotāpanna*' but remained as an Upāsaka, while Bhallika joined the Saṅgha by becoming a monk and soon attained spiritual proficiency in 'Six Supernatural Powers' *(Chaḷabhiññā)* and became Arahat.[3] The *Theragāthā* contains his utterances or Udāna only in some *Gāthās*.

Professor Lokesh Chandra is of the view that 'Kaṃsa' or 'Kaṃsabhoga', the country from where Tapassu and Bhallika are said to have hailed in the Pali texts, was a district in the Uttarapatha of which Asitañjana was the capital. He is also of the opinion that Ukkala, referred to in the Pali *Mahāvagga*, was also located in the region of Uttarāpatha. He also believes that the account of Hiuen-tsiang in connection with his visit to the stūpas built by Tapassu and Bhallika over the hair-relics of the Buddha is correct. The Chinese pilgrim has correctly marked the geographical location as it was a

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1. Beal S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 47-48; Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 111-113.
2. Beal S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.- 50.
3. *Theragāthā Aṭṭhakathā* (Nalanda), p.-69.

living tradition in his time. I-tsiang translates *Bhallika* as *ts'-un-lo,* a 'village'. Thus, *Bhallika* is a variant of Bālhīka and stands for Balkh.[1] Professor Lokesh Chandra further points that the word *bhallika* refers to a kind of copper as enumerated under the eight '*pisāca lohāni*' or metals coming from Pisāca country, mentioned in the *Vibhanga Commentary*. He suggests that *bhallika* was to be used after the name of the town Bālhika or Balkh and *kaṃsa,* the metal got its name after the place of its origin, namely the province of Kaṃsa, in which Balkh was situated, where the two merchants Tapassu and Bhallika constructed the stupa, which was witnessed by Hiuen-tsiang.[2] We believe that the above inferences drawn by Professor Lokesh Chandra appear to be nearer to the truth.

There is a tradition in Sri Lanka that Tapassu and Bhallika later brought the hair-relics of the Buddha to this country which they enshrined in the Girihandu or Girikaṇḍika Cetiya. This tradition is supported both by literary and epigraphical evidences. The *Pujāvaliya,* a Sinhalese work of about 13th century A.D., records that Tapassu and Bhallika took the hair-relics in a jeweled casket to their own city and worshipped there. Later while on their sea voyage they came to Sri Lanka taking the sacred objects with them. Going in search of water and firewood, they came to the place named 'Girihaṇḍu'. They placed the casket of the relics on the summit of the rock and, when they returned after having cooked and eaten their meals, they were unable to move the relic-casket from the place where it was. They then knew that this was a holy place, and having honoured it, covered (the casket) with a heap of stone, offered flowers and went on their way. In later time, there was vihāra named Girihaṇḍu at this place.[3]

A similar information of Girikaṇḍika Cetiya is known from the Tiriyay Rock Inscription in Sri Lanka of about 7th or 8th century A.D. in which it is mentioned that the two merchants, 'Trapussaka' and 'Vallika', had founded it.[4] Obviously 'Trapussaka' and 'Vallika' are Tapassu and Bhallika, also known from other sources. It is interesting that apart from the Girikaṇḍika Cetiya at Tiriyay, there is another stūpa called Girihaṇḍu (Girikaṇḍa) at Ambalantota in south Sri

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1. Chandra Lokesh : *Three Iranian Words in the Buddhist Tradition*, New Delhi (1974), p.-6; Also Cf. John Rosenfield : *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (1967), p.-220 in which he calls, 'Bhallika a man from Balkh'.
2. Chandra Lokesh : *Op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
3. *Pujāvaliya* (1924), p.-98.
4. *Epigraphia Zeylonica*, Vol.-IV, No.-18, pp. 151-160. The inscription reads thus : *Trapussakairva Vallikairva vaṇiggaṇaih kritaḥ......Girikaṇḍi caityaṃ.*

Lanka. Local tradition also claims it to be the repository of the hair relic presented to Tapassu and Bhallika by the Buddha.[1]

As in Sri Lanka so also in Burma, the Buddhists firmly believe that the hair-relics delivered to Tapassu and Bhallika by the Buddha are enshrined in the stūpa of Shwe Dagon at Rangoon.[2] Whatever may be the fact in these traditions current in Sri Lanka or in Burma, there appears some grain of truth that Tapassu and Bhallika got the hair-relics of the Buddha over which they erected a stūpa.

That Bhallika became a monk and later an Arhanta is confirmed by some other accounts found in the Pali *Tipiṭaka*. In the *Theragāthā* verse No.-7, Bhallika tells to Māra that he has overcome all fears as he has become an Arhat.[3] In the *Apadana*, the name of Bhallika occurs as 'Vallikāra Phaladāyaka Thera',[4] putting him at an important position among the Arahanta-monks during the life-time of the Buddha. No doubt Bhallika was held in great esteem and veneration in the Buddhist Order in India and so also in his own native land and Sri Lanka and Burma.

Tapassu and Bhallika as the Carrier of the Message of Buddha

As it has been suggested earlier, that Bhallika got his name after the town 'Bālhīka' where he was born, but the Pali and other Buddhist Sanskrit texts have however rendered 'Bālhīka' as 'Bhallika,' which does not seem improbable, since numerous personal names are still given after important towns, current in India and elsewhere from the very early times. That Bhallika and his elder brother Tappassu hailed from Balkh or ancient Bālhīka and that they erected the stūpa over the hair relics of the Buddha appears to be a historical fact. They were the first to spread the 'message' of the Buddha in Afghanistan, although not in a missionary way that we have discussed earlier. That Bhallika had attained the highest stage, the Arahatahood, the noblest stage of saintly life and that his elder brother Tapassu had become a *Sotāpanna* or 'Stream-runner', the first stage of sainthood, it is reasonable to believe that they probably did their best to disseminate the teachings of the Buddha in their homeland. It is true that we have no source to throw light on their religious activities that they undertook in their own motherland after carrying the 'message' of the Buddha there. A vihāra was probably erected for Bhallika at

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1. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, p.-686.
2. Parnavitana, S. : *Epigrphia Zeylonica*, Vol.-IV, No.-18, p.-155.
3. *Theragāthā* (Nalanda), *Khuddakanikāya*, Vol.-II, p.-235.
4. *Apadana* (Nalanda), *Khuddakanikāya*, Vol.-VII, p.-32.

Balkh when he returned there after becoming a Buddhist monk. It is also gleaned from the accounts of Hiuen-tsiang who happened to stay in a vihāra for some time, located outside the town of Balkh. He calls it 'Nava-Vihāra' or the 'New Monastery', which obviously suggests the existence of an 'old vihāra' of former days. Probably this "old-vihara' was none other than the old Bhallika's monastery erected in Balkh in ancient time; and when Hiuen-tsiang came here in about 630 A.D., of course centuries after, the Bhallika's vihara was no more in existence, probably for being built of perishable materials. The vihāra of Bhallika might have been the donation of his own family or his brother or even of the king of the country, for he being the son of a very rich merchant family of the area and that also he had become a 'Perfect saint', Arahanta. If so, the Bhallika-vihāra of Balkh may be regarded as the 'first' vihāra erected in Afghanistan, even when the Tathāgata was alive. It is a significant event indeed in the history of Buddhism. Hiuen-tsiang records that "People call Balkh 'Little Rājagṛiha' on account of many sacred traces therein".[1] This statement of Hiuen-tsiang is significant in relatión to Balkh when compared with Rajagriha, which we will discuss later. Balkh perhaps became important also for having its 'first' monastery in the country, like the first monastery of the Buddha, the *Veluvanārāma* at Rājagṛiha donated by King Bimbisāra of Magadha when he visited this town after his Enlightenment along with Uruvela Kassapa and his other erstwhile Jatila companions. Probably 'Bhallika-Vihāra' is also one of the factors to calling Balkh "Little Rājagṛiha" by the people in 630 A.D., even centuries after its erection.

The importance of Tapassu and Bhallika has been singular in the Buddhist literature as these two brothers were 'the first lay-devotees' of the Buddha and also because Bhallika became an *Arahat* (emancipated) and also probably because he carried the 'message' of the Buddha to a foreign land for the first time during the life-time of the Buddha. They are not only known through literatures of different languages but are also referred to in the inscriptions, which again points to their great popularity and importance. A relief recovered from Shotorak, an ancient Buddhist site near Begram (Kapiśa) in Afghanistan, depicts them as offering food to the Buddha who is in meditation under a tree. They appear bearded in close-fitted dress in Indo-Sythian style and flank the Buddha. This sculpture is dated *circa* early 2nd century A.D.[1] Another representation of them has been noticed on the *toraṇa* of the South Gateway of Sanchi.[2] The scene of Tapassu and Bhallika offering food to the Buddha also appears on the stone sculptures at Amaravati,[3] Nagarjunikonda,[4] Taxila,[5] Takhta-i-Bahi[6] and on some motifs in China.[7] Most of these sculptural representations are of quite early period, which indeed corroborate the authenticity of the story given in different literatures. We have mentioned above as to how the story of Tapassu and Bhallika became popular in Burma and Sri Lanka where they are claimed to have erected the *Cetiya* (stūpa) over the hair-relics of the Buddha, which again affirms to its authenticity. In all probability, the story of Tapassu-Bhallika and their erection of stūpa (or stupas) over the hair-relics of the Buddha seem to be a historical fact. Thus, the town of Balkh also became popular to other Buddhist countries because of these two great sons of Afghanistan.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-44; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-48.; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-108; Cf. *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol.-II, pp. 685-687.

"Little Rājagṛiha", Another Name of Balkh

We have however no archaeological evidence of any kind which can help us in discerning Balkh as the birth-place of Tapassu and Bhallika, but 'people calling capital *Po-ho* (Balkh) "Little Rajagriha" as recorded by Hiuen-tsiang, is of some significance. Hiuen-tsiang also witnessed the two stūpas over the hair relics erected by Tapassu and Bhallika near Balkh which we discussed earlier is also of great importance in this context. How and when Balkh rose to such a great religious importance as to be called "Little Rājagṛiha" by the people is not known to us either by Hiuen-tsiang's itinerary or by Hwui-Li's book on his life or by any other source whatsoever. In the *Life of Hiuen-tsiang* the causes of it being so called are mentioned simply as 'many the sacred traces therein'. We however believe that there should be some other factors also to designate it so. Some common features should exist between Rājagṛiha and Balkh, of cultural or religious significance which made the people to call Balkh "Little

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1. Rosenfield, John M. : *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (1967), p.-220, Plate No.-102, now in Kabul museum.
2. Marshall, J. & Foucher, A. : *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Plate No.-19. C3.
3. Barrett D.M. : *Sculptures from Amarāvati in the British Museum*, p.-66; Fergusson : *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Plate-LVIII.1.
4. Longhurst : *M.A.S.I.*, No.-54, Plate-XLVII. b.
5. Marshall, J. : *Taxila*, Vol.-III, Plate-117, 220; also p.-716.
6. Foucher : *L'Art Greco-Buddhist in the Gandhara*, Vol.-II, pp. 104, 126-227.
7. Rosenfield, John M. : *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, p.-310; In central Asia also, at Bezekli, see *M.A.S.I.*, No.-54.

Rājagṛiha". It is also important to note that no common physical features exist between these two places. While Rājagṛiha is surrounded by five hills, Balkh is situated on plains. The only semblance that we can possibly imagine between the two may be something related to cultural or religious nature. Let us make a probe to find out the probable factors that may be regarded as responsible for this tradition in the public of Balkh. We know Rājagṛiha (Pali Rājagaha) holds an unique important place in the Buddhist history and culture although not included in the list of 'Four Important Pilgrimages', (*viz.* Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Isipatana Migadāya, (Sarnath) and Kusinārā). But in some respects Rājagṛiha holds even a greater importance than these great four places of Buddhists. There are some epoch-making events of Buddhist history and culture which took place at Rajagriha leaving far-reaching impacts in making Buddhism a great religion of the world. The following facts may be pointed out regarding the importance of Rājagṛiha :

(1) The First Great Proselytism

Rājagṛiha is the first place which actually witnessed the beginning of proselytism of the people to Buddhism in Magadha. It is recorded in the texts that when the Buddha arrived at Laṭṭhivanuyyana in Rājagṛiha along with erstwhile Jaṭila mendicants, Uruvela Kassapa and his two brothers, Nadī Kassapa and Gaya Kassapa and one thousand former Jatila disciples as the followers of the Buddha, several thousands of people of Aṅga and Magadha countries assembled there to listen Buddha. The king of Magadha, Bimbisāra himself went to Laṭṭhivanuyyāna to greet them. It is said that 'myriads of people of Anga and Magadha' embraced Buddhism on this occasion and king Bimbisāra himself entertained the Buddha and his other disciples in his palace and declared himself to be the lay-devotee of the Buddha. He remained a great patron of the Buddha and Buddhism till his death. It is indeed an epoch-making event in the history of Buddhism as proselytism began rolling with great force by embracing the former followers of Uruvela Kassapa of Aṅga and Magadha to Buddhism on this occasion at Rājagṛiha.

(2) Ordination of Two Chief Disciples (Aggasāvakas) at Rājagṛiha

Sāriputta and Moggallāna are said to be the 'Chief Disciples' of the Buddha. Sāriputta is described as the 'foremost' among those who possessed 'wisdom' (*edaggaṃ Mahāpaññānaṃ*) and[1] Moggallana as foremost among those who possessed *Iddhi* (Supernatural powers).[2] Formerly both of them were the disciples of one Sañjaya mendicant but they left him and joined the Order of the Buddha along with 250 co-ascetics who were with them in the Āśrama of Sañjaya. The conversion of Sāriputta and Moggallāna into Buddhism is an important event in the history of Buddhism which was held at Rājagṛiha.

(3) First Land-Grant to Buddha and His Saṅgha

After adopting Buddhism as his personal faith king Bimbisāra expressed his desire to donate a suitable place for the 'residence' of the Buddha and his Sangha. He granted the Valuvanuyyana, a garden near Rājagṛiha town to the Buddha. It was the first land-grant received by the Buddha for himself as also for his Saṅgha. It is a significant event in the history of Buddhist monasticism. On this very occasion the Buddha also allowed his monks to accept the land grant if offered by any person for the use of the Saṅgha. The Buddhist Order was thus authorized by the Buddha to own any land for the construction of their 'residence' (an Ārāma or Vihāra). Rājagṛiha may be regarded as the first place where the first '*Ārāma*' (monastic residence) was established.[3]

(4) First Royal Patronage to Buddhism at Rājagṛiha

We have mentioned above the episode of the conversion of Bimbisāra to Buddhist faith. He was the first king who not only remained a devout follower of Buddhism throughout his life, but also did his best to provide all sorts of facilities and support to this new Religion. The royal support naturally boosted the propagation of Buddhism further[4]. Other kings of the country, like Prasenjit of Kośala, Uḍyāna of Kosāmbi, the Vajjis of Vesālī and many many others also gave support to Buddhism. Evidently, as the first royal patronage began from Rājagṛiha, many Buddhist kings in India and abroad began to extend their support to Buddhism with full zeal and devotion. Even

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1. *Aṅguttaranikāya* (Nalanda), I p.-20; Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, pp. 1109-1118.
2. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda), pp. 38-41.
3. *Mahāvagga* (Nalanda), pp. 36-38; The Buddhist monastic establishment is usually known as 'Ārāma' or Saṅghārāma but *vihāra* is more commonly used, so much so that even the a State of India presently called Bihar which has got its name after this ancient term.
4. For Bimbisāra see : *D.P.P.N.*, vol.-II, pp. 285-289.

today in some Buddhist countries, Buddhism still receives the royal patronage, for instance, in Thailand.

(5) First Buddhist Council held at Rājagṛiha

Soon after the passing away of the Buddha a convention consisting of 500 most eminent disciples of the Buddha, all Arhantas, was held at Rājagṛiha on the Vebhara hill in front of the Sattapaṇṇi cave in order to make the collection of the Words of the Buddha. On this occasion the recension of the 'Words of the Buddha' (*Buddha-Vacana*), known as the *Tipiṭaka*, was made. This Buddhist Council is a significant event in the history and literature of Buddhism. Later, four or five similar Buddhist Councils were held by the Buddhist Fraternity, more or less for the similar purposes at other places but the First Council of Ragariha holds a singular importance.

(6) The Second 'Promulgation of Dharma-cakra' by Buddha at Rājagṛiha, according to Mahāyāna Tradition

The first Sermon by the Buddha, also called the 'Promulgation of the Dhammacakka', (*Dhammacakkapavattana*) or 'Wheel of Law' is the traditionally said to have taken place at Isipatana Migadaya, the Deer Park at Sarnath, Varanasi soon after his Enlightenment to his five Disciples (Pañcavaggiya Bhikkhus). But, according to the Mahāyāna tradition, the Buddha made another'Promulgation' of his Dharma on the top of the Gṛiddhakūṭa at Rājagṛiha. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasutra,* an ancient text of the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism, still popular in many Mahāyāna countries, such as in China and Japana, possesses a story of the Second Promulgation of the 'Wheel of Law' by the Buddha, by delivering this *Sūtra* at Rājagṛiha.[1] The followers of Mahāyāna school hold firm belief in this story and regard Rājagṛiha as important a place as Sarnath.

(7) Rājagṛiha as a Centre of many Religious Teachers

In many Buddhist texts Rājagṛiha is described as the abode of many great religious teachers in ancient days. In Pali texts we find the names of Six Great Teachers of the time of the Buddha who had their centres at Rājagṛiha. These included Nigaṇthanātaputta (Mahāvīra), Purāṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Kesakambali, Pakudha Kaccāyana and Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta. They had large followers including mendicants and laymen.[1] Thus, Rajagriha became renowned as a great centre of many religious teachers who had contributed considerably to Indian philosophy and culture.

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[1] Cf. Deva, Narendra : *Bauddha Dharma-Darsana* (in Hindu), pp. 141-148; *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasutra* (Mithila), III. 33-34, p.-50; "*Idam punarbhagavatā ādya Saddharmapuṇḍarikasutra* (Mithila), III. 33-34, p.-50; "*Idam punarbhagavatā ādya devaputratasyām anuttaram dvitiyam dharmacakram pravartitaṃ. Tena ca devaputratasyām pravartesi loke apratipudgalam. velayamimā gāthā abhasa : Dharmacakraṃ pravartitamtatra, Baraṇasyām Mahāvira skandhānamudayam vyayam. Prathamam pravartitamtatra, Duhsaddadheya yastesam desito adya Vināyaka. dvitiyamiha nāyaka,*

(8) Rājagṛiha, a Fortified Capital and a Great Trade Centre

Rājagṛiha was closely associated with the life of the Buddha, so also it was known as a fortified strong capital of Magadha. The town was protected by five hills encircling it from all sides and making it ideally suited for a metropolis. It was also a great centre of merchandise and was one of the 'six great cities' of India, others being Campā, Sāvatthī, Sāketa, Kosāmbī, and Bārāṇasī. Many important trade-routes passed through this town. One road connected Rājagṛiha with Takkasila, the capital of Gandhāra, one hundred ninety two *Yojanas* away.[2] Probably this road proceeded further west, across the passes in the Himalayas and touched Balkh, where trade-routes met from the West and Mediterranean and also from China.

(9) Many Buddhist Sacred Sites in Rājagṛiha

Buddha resided at Rājagṛiha for a long time and spent a number of his Rainy-Resort *(Vassavasa)* there. Many of his sermons are said to have been delivered there. Veluvanarama, Giddhakūṭa, Sītavana, Tapodā, Laṭṭhivanuyyāna, Jīvakambavana and others are directly connected with his life and religious activities of one kind or another. It is also said that a great stūpa was built at Rājagṛiha to deposit his corporeal relics after his Mahāparinibbāna. Aśoka is said to have opened it and distributed the relics to numerous places where he erected stūpas over them. We have not yet recovered any relic of the Buddha from Rājagṛiha nor do we know that site; but chances of finding the sacred relic from there may be hoped. Rājagṛiha has been a sacred place of pilgrimage for the devout Buddhists of India and abroad since the life-time of the Buddha.

We have tried to show above some important features of Rājagṛiha that made it so important in ancient time. We will now see some common features associated with these two great towns, Rājagṛiha and

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1. *Dighanikāya* (Nalanda), *Samannaphalasutta*, pp. 41-75.
2. Cf. *D.P.P.N.*, Vol.-II, p.-723.

Balkh, one in the east and the other thousand kilometres away in the west, while latter being called by the same name, "Little Rājagṛiha". Some common features of cultural, religious or even political importance may be pointed out to both these great ancient cities. Both the towns were the capitals of their respective countries. While Rājagṛiha was a naturally protected capital encircled by five mountains, Balkh, though situated on plains, was strongly protected by walls, as described by Hiuen-tsiang,[1] a city 'well fortified', during his visit in 630 A.D. The ancient walls of the town can still be seen there. No doubt both the capitals held considerable political importance. For trade and commerce also they were equally renowned, where traders from different countries brought their merchandise for sale; and probably both were connected by roads.[2] Balkh is regarded as the 'mother of towns' by the Arabs, so also Rājagṛiha was one of the most important six towns of India. Balkh is said to be the birth place of Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroasterism, a religion still followed by some people in India and Iran. Rājagṛiha was also a great centre of different religions of India, where 'Six Founders' of Religions dwelt, during the time of Buddha, about whom we have referred to above.

Both as the Places of First Dissemination of Buddhism

We have discussed above the story of Tapassu and Bhallika, the two touring merchants who hailed from Balkh. We have also seen that they after receiving the hair relics from the Buddha, erected the stūpas over them on the city-gate of their town, as reported by Hiuen-tsiang. Bhallika, as recorded in the Pali texts, became a Buddhist monk ordained by the Buddha himself at Rājagṛiha and became an Arahat, while his elder brother also became a *Sotapanna* by hearing the preaching of Buddha. No doubt the 'message' of the Buddha reached Balkh by these two brothers who remained the great followers of Buddhism throughout their life. Thus, the first proselytism of Buddhism in Afghanistan began from Balkh, exactly as it started to gaining ground in India from Rājagṛiha soon after the arrival of Buddha there in Latthivanuyyana along with Uruvela Kassapa and his two erstwhile Jaṭila brothers. Myriads of people from Anga and Magadha, who were earlier the followers of Uruvela Kassapa, are said to have professed Buddhism on this occasion. In fact Rājagṛiha was the first place in India from where the real dissemination of Buddhism began. The first establishment of Buddhism at Balkh in

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-44.

[2] Cf. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-50, foot-note.2.

Afghanistan is of equal significance, if not greater than Rājagṛiha, as the *Dhamma* took its first root there when the Buddha was alive. It is also recorded in the *Mahāvagga* (Pali Vināya) that the Two Chief Disciples of the Buddha (*Aggasavakas*), Sariputta and Moggallana were ordained at Rājagṛiha, so also, Balkh was the place where his two 'First Lay-disciples', Tappasu and Bhallika lived. We also know that the first vihāra for the Buddha was established at Rājagṛiha in the Veluvána, donated by king Bimbisāra, so also the first vihāra in Afghanistan was erected for Bhallika at Balkh as inferred from the accounts of Hiuen-tsiang. Although we have no archaeological evidence which could help us in identifying either the site of the first vihāra of Balkh, or the Veluvanārāma at Rājagṛiha, there is every possibility of a vihara at Balkh built for Bhallika when he returned home after becoming a Buddhist monk. Thus, Rājagṛiha and Balkh both were the important places where the first monastic establishments were erected.

Buddhist texts mention numerous sacred places in Rājagṛiha where caityas, stūpas and vihāras were built for the Buddha and his Saṅgha. During the life time of the Buddha there were as many as eighteen large monasteries in Rājagṛiha.[1] Later some stūpas were erected and some contained the relics of the Buddha. Aśoka opened some stūpas and obtained the Buddha's relics. Veluvanārāma, Laṭṭhivanuyyana, Tapoda etc., are closely associated with the Buddha and his disciples. Buddha is said to have delivered several sermons from these places. These places are held in great esteem and veneration by the Buddhists. The devoted pilgrims have been visiting these places of Rajagriha till today. As Rājagṛiha had several sacred places inside the town so also Balkh was held in esteem for 'many sacred relics enshrined therein'. Hiuen-tsiang paid his visit to sacred places in Balkh in order to pay his homage. He also reports that the Nava-vihāra in Balkh possessed three relics of the Buddha, namely, a water pot, a tooth and a sweeping brush.[2] As Rājagṛiha stands next to the 'Four Pilgrimages' of the Buddhists, in some cases rather more important than them, so also probably Balkh gained importance in Afghanistan. Although Uḍyāna and Kapiśa were the places from where the actual dissemination of Buddhism started by the monks or missionaries who had established centres and monasteries, Balkh probably held more significance and reverence than them as the 'message' of the Buddha had first arrived there by Tapassu and Bhallika centuries before. And yet again, it was

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1. *D.P.P.N.*, vol.-II, p.-723.
2. Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-49.

Bhallika, a native of this place, who became the 'first monk' of Afghanistan and who established the 'first' monastery for himself. Whatever might be the other reasons to call Balkh the 'Little Rājagṛiha' no doubt it held a great cultural and religious importance exactly as Rājagṛiha in India.

Buddhism in Early Period at Balkh

The advent of Buddhism and establishment of a monastery Balkh by Tapassu and Bhallika during Buddha's life-time may appear fictitious to some, yet the anecdote of Tapassu and Bhallika cannot be entirely untrue. There is some grain of truth in the story as it is found in several ancient texts, almost with identical descriptions and also supported by sculptural and epigraphical evidences. Another fact may also be of some importance in this context. We have discussed elsewhere as to how the Mahāsāṅghikas established a great stronghold at Uḍyāna (easternmost part of Afghanistan, close to Gandhāra) after being separated from Early Theravāda School of Buddhism on the occasion of Second Buddhist Council held at Vesalī, one century after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha.[1] This was an important event in the history of Buddhism as Buddhism in Afghanistan then took the first firm root, and flourished as the faith of the country for more than fifteen centuries. Another monk Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī, an exponent of Early Theravāda Buddhism and one of the main participants in the Second Buddhist Council is also said to have stayed for some time in Kipin or Kapiśa for the propagation of Early Theravāda Buddhism probably in order to counteract the influence of the Mahāsāṅghikas. Whether Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī visited Balkh any time or not, probably not, as this place was already under the influence of Early Buddhism introduced by Bhallika about a century earlier. The Third Buddhist Council which was held during the reign of Aśoka, the Great Buddhist Emperor, is of paramount importance so far as the dissemination of Buddhism is concerned, particularly its spread in the foreign countries. It is recorded that at the end of the Council, missionaries led by eminent monk-saints were despatched to different parts in the country and abroad. One Majjhantika Thera was made responsible for propagating the Dhamma in Kaśmira and Gandhāra while Thera Mahārakkhita went to Yona country.[2] All these countries were the part of the dominion of Aśoka. Yona country is none other than the interior part of Afghanistan where Greek population had settled since Alexander the Great, while Gandhāra comprised the northwestern region of the Indian Sub-continent including probably some portion of the easternmost Afghanistan, Uḍyāna. Balkh was not a part of Mauryan empire as it was then ruled by the Graeco-Bactrian Satraps where some population of Greeks were settled. Although Greek settlements were there, we have since no source to discern if Mahārakkhita Thera paid a visit to Balkh, probably not, simply because the Saddharma had already taken its root there and hence it was not at all purposeful to visit there.

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[1] Cf. Dutta, N. : *Buddhist Sects in India*, (1970), pp. 69-70.

[2] *Dīpavamsa*, Ch.-VIII; *Mahāvaṃsa*, Ch.-XII; *Samantapasādikā* (Nalanda), Vol.-III, pp. 54 ff. and many others.

After the collapse of the Mauryan empire Afghanistan was ruled by the so called Indo-Greek or Indo-Bactrian kings. These kings are numerous but we know very little about them from literary sources, save and except from their coins which have been found all over Afghanistan, Pakistan and some parts of northern India. Only one king Menander (Pali-Milinda) is known to us from a Pali-book, the *Milindapañho*, supposed to have been composed during his reign in about 1st century B.C . He is said to have adopted Buddhism under the influence of one Thera Nāgasena by name. Some of his coins bear the symbol of *Cakra* representing the 'Wheel of Law' of the Buddhists. He is also credited to have erected a number of stūpas and vihāras in his kingdom. Being a Buddhist king he holds the appellation of *Dhramikas* (Sanskrit-*Dhārmikasya*), a title exclusively used by the Buddhists.[1] His faith to Buddhism is well documented in the *Milinadapañho*. His empire of course comprised only central and eastern Afghanistan, and Balkh was probably not under his rule, but his zeal towards Buddhism was intense and Balkh being a neighbouring state of his kingdom might have received some impetus from him.

Balkh and Kaniṣka

Perhaps Kaniṣka was the first Buddhist king who ruled over Balkh. Kaniṣka's western capital was Kapiśa in Afghanistan from where he governed all his western provinces upto Central Asia. It is well-known that Kaniṣka patronized Sarvāstivāda school of Buddhism and gave his support to Buddhist scholars and monks who belonged to this school. It was during his period that Buddhist art took new dimensions and the images of Buddha, his life-scenes and of other deities began to be carved out on stone. He is the only Buddhist king who depicted the figure of Buddha with legend BODDO in Greek (also 'Sakyamuni Buddha') on his gold coins. The convention of the Fourth Buddhist Council during his period is well known, in which the *Vibhāsaśāstra* was compiled. We also know the measures that he took to patronise Buddhism by erecting a number of stūpas, vihāras and shrines throughout his empire. Buddhism was probably introduced to Central Asia and further to China during his reign.

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[1] For cons of Menander see : Allan J. : *A Catalogure of Indian Coins in the British Museum, Coins of Ancient India,* London (1936); Cunningham A. : *Coins of Alexanders Successors in the East,* London (1984); Narain A.K. : *The Indo-Greeks,* Plate-III.

Balkh was situated on the cross-roads from India in the East and from Greece, Rome, Central Asia and China in the West. It was a great trade centre and developed as a depot and a transshipment point for both regional and international goods during the Kuṣāna period. Caravans brought gold and silver vessels and wines from Roman empire; rubies, furs, aromatic gums, drugs, raw-silk and embroidered silk from China and Central Asia; and spices, cosmetics, ivory and precious gems of infinite variety from India.[1] Carvan traders used to traverse long routes and pass through many countries belonging to different religions, cultures and traditions. The mendicants and wanderers, recluses also used to travel with these 'touring merchants' (or *Satthavahas*) taking long journeys depending upon them for protection and subsistence. During the Kaniṣka's rule the Buddhist activities rather became more brisk than before and many Indian Buddhist monks who either independently or joining with these touring merchants visited Central Asia, China and they invariably passed through Balkh which lay on the main route. Balkh, not only served as a 'depot and transshipment point for goods' but also acted as a meeting place of different cultures and religions. Buddhist monk-scholars, saints and pilgrims assembled and stayed in the *Ārāmas* of Balkh where they held philosophical and religious discussions. Balkh, being the most prosperous town of Afghanistan during this period, naturally had several vihāras, temples, shrines, stūpas etc. erected by the Buddhist devotees and merchants and nobles and common people. It also became a great centre of Buddhist learning and culture and practice. Probably the period of Kaniṣka's rule is the beginning of an era of the advancement of Buddhism in this region; and as time passed, some of its viharas became the great centres of advance-learning and practice of Buddhism, as noticed by some Chinese travellers, although they visited the places some centuries after, about which we will discuss later. No doubt, Buddhism, particularly the Later Theravāda School took its firm root there and flourished for centuries till its disappearance from this country. The Buddhist viharas became the abodes of learned monks and practicioners and mendicants. Many monks and scholars from different countries of the East as well of the West flocked there for studies and practice. Probably it was the best centre of higher learning in Afghanistan which began to develop from the time of Kaniṣka due to his patronage and support.

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, p.-70.

Balkh after Kaniṣka

Buddhism continued to flourish despite changes of rule or any other political upheaval. The Sassanians occupied Balkh after the Kuṣāṇas sometime in 3rd century A.D. and was governed by a Sassanian Viceroy who probably was not a Buddhist. Some believe that the religion of Zoroaster was revived by the Sassanians[1] and Balkh being the birth-place of Zoroaster, the founder of the religion became an important centre of this religion. This may be partially correct we have no knowledge if the Sassanians had ever indulged in persecuting Buddhism at Balkh to check its advancement. Buddhism flourished there as before. Some Zroasterian fire-temples erected by the Sassanians might have come up in the town. One chief fire temple of Zoroasterism is said to have stood in the famous Nava-Vihāra (the New Monastery and not *Nava-Bihar* or 'Early Spring'), but no such temple was seen by Hiuen-tsiang when he visited it in about 610 A.D., as suggested by Dupree.[2] As a matter of fact the Nava-Vihāra was then a great centre of advance learning of Theravāda Buddhism, which attracted Hiuen-tsiang, although a staunch Mahāyānī monk, to stay there for some time for religious discussions. To locate a Fire Temple in this vihāra is rather incorrect.

Hūṇas in Balkh

Hephthalites or Hūṇas raided Afghanistan sometime by the end of 4th century A.D. from the west and probably Balkh was then their first victim, for being the most prosperous town of the country and also lay on the direct route to the East. The Hūṇas are described as a barbarous race and their attack on Balkh must have been devastating, creating some havoc and chaos by plundering the town. They conquered the whole Oxus valley and occupied Wakhan, Kougiar and Tabak and Gandhāra and extended their rule over a good portion of N. India.[3]

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh* , Kabul (1967), p.-73.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

[3] Cf. Biswas, Atreyi : *The Political History of the Hunas in India*, New Delhi (1973) pp. 23-75; Thakur, Upendra : *The Hunas in India*, Varanasi (1967), pp. 25-31.

Hūṇas and Buddhism

The early Hūṇas followed a religion akin to Zoroasterism and worshipped Fire and the Sun.[1] The most noted kings, Toramāṇa and Mihirakula, worshipped Brahmanical deities such as Śiva besides their ancestral Gods. But as the time passed some of the Hūṇa kings, in later days, became the followers of Buddhism. One Tarkhan Nizak was a zealous Buddhist and it is said that having learnt that the Chief monk of Nava-Vihāra of Balkh, Barnak had embraced Islam, he not only reprimanded but beheaded him.[2] It appears that the Hūṇas' rule in Balkh was never so severe as to oust the established religion, the Buddhism, nor did it cause any considerable damage to its centres or shrines. The Buddhist Saṅghārāmas continued to flourish as before.

Balkh and Hiuen-tsiang

By the time, when Hiuen-tsiang visited Balkh in about 610 A.D. , it had already developed as a very very important centre of Buddhism where many monasteries had become renowned as the great educational institutions, particularly for Hīnayāna Buddhism. He calls the town '*Fo-ho-lo*' and says that 'people call the capital city the 'Little Rajagriha' for 'so many sacred relics therein',[3] which we have discussed earlier. When Hiuen-tsiang visited the place, there were about 100 vihāras and about 3000 monks dwelling there. They all belonged to Hīnayāna school. It appears that from the time of the first introduction of Buddhism by Tapassu and Bhallika, Theravāda or Hīnayāna Buddhism steadily developed there and took its firm root and flourished for several centuries. We have already mentioned the episode of Tapassu and Bhallika and also the religious activities that took place during the reign of Kaniṣka. We have also seen that the vihāra erected for Bhallika probably formed the nucleus of the monastic establishments; and during the Kaniṣka's rule, many more monasteries and stūpas also came up in and around the town. No doubt some of them developed as the centres of learning *(Pariyatti)* while others became the abode of those monks who practised meditation and spirituality *(Paṭipatti).*

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[1] Thakur, Upendra : *Op. cit.*, p.-269.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. -260.

[3] Beal, S. : *The Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-44; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-48.

Pariyatti and Paṭipatti

As a matter of fact Buddhism is twofold, one is called *Pariyatti* and the other *Paṭipatti*. *Pariyatti* is that aspect of Buddhism which includes the theoretical knowledge of Buddhism, acquired by studying scriptures and understanding the philosophy and tenets by reading the *Śāstras*. The experimental knowledge is gained only by treading upon the path as laid down in the texts, technically called *Paṭipatti*. Practical knowledge or meditational practices, rising upto the acquisition of supernatural powers include strict observance of morality and other penances and practices *(Dhutaṅgas)*. Buddhism, like other studies of modern sciences, has laid stress on both, the theoretical and practical understanding and knowledge, and at times, the practical knowledge or *Paṭipatti* is more stressed than mere understanding the theory or *Pariyatti*. In this context the 19th Gāthā of the *Dhammapada* is enough to illustrate which runs thus : *Bahumpi ce saṁhitam bhāsamāno na takkaro hoti naro pamatto. Gopo'va gavo gaṇayam paresaṃ na bhāgavā samannassa.* ("A deluded person cannot be regarded as 'competent' even if he has mastered in reciting many scriptures. He is not fit for sainthood, like a cowboy who counts the cows of others (none belonging to himself"). In ancient days Buddhist monasteries were the 'abodes' of many masters, eminent in both the fields, arrangements were available for the both. Meditational cells were erected in the monasteries for practice, so also, the libraries were there containing hundreds of manuscripts of scriptures and *śāstras* for studies. Nalanda Mahāvihāra, though more renowned for *Pariyatti* or theoretical studies, also had the facilities for *Paṭipatti* training. In one of the vihāras (No.-2), a small meditational cell has been discovered which was meant for such a training.

Nava-Vihāra of Balkh

As Nalanda Mahāvihāra was renowned far and wide in ancient time for higher studies, so also, the Nava-Vihāra was an important Buddhist monastery in Balkh for advance learning. Hiuen-tsiang visited both these ancient vihāras of Buddhist studies and has described them in high sounding words. According to his account the Nava-Vihara was built outside the city on the north-west quarter. He informs that it was built by a former king.[1] The Nava-Vihāra, or the 'New Monastery', suggests the existence of an 'old vihāra' which stood in old days somewhere in the town. Hiuen-tsiang however does not speak anything about it, probably because by then it was no more. The location of the 'old vihara' is difficult to identify, but it appears that it was probably somewhere in the town. It was the very 'first' vihara built for the 'abode' of Bhallika when he returned his home town after being initiated as a monk by the Buddha himself at Rājagṛiha that we have discussed earlier. The vihara might have been erected by his family member or by the king of the country. Hiuen-tsiang who visited Balkh some ten centuries after the construction of Bhallika-Vihāra, did not see it as by then was completely crumbled down and disappeared, probably for being built of not very strong materials. No doubt, it should have been erected at some place 'nor very far nor too close' to the town and as time passed, the area of the town also expanded and it came 'within' the town. A new Monastery or Nava-vihāra was therefore built by the king of the country outside the town, who, of course, was a Buddhist.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-44; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-49; Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang*, p.-108.

Nava-Vihāra, a Sacred Place

The Nava-Vihara (or Nava Saṅghārāma) was certainly built much before Hiuen-tsiang's visit. It was a strong built vihāra and was 'remarkable for its imposing structures'. It was the most sacred place of Balkh as the water-basin or pot, and a tooth-relic of the Buddha, about one inch long of yellow-white colour were preserved in its shrine-hall. At this very place a sweeping brush of the Buddha, made of *Kuśa* grass, about three feet long, about seven inches round with ornamented handle, was also kept.[1] These sacred objects of Buddha kept in this vihāra were held in great esteem and veneration by all the monks and lay-devotees who visited there. The Nava-Vihāra naturally gained great reputation and importance in the country and abroad. When Hiuen-tsiang came to Balkh, though a Mahāyānī, decided to stay here, a centre of Hīnayāna school. He records, "There is a figure of Buddha which is lustrous with noted gems, and the hall in which it stands is also adorned with precious substances of rare value. This is the reason why it has often been robbed by chieftains of neighbouring countries, covetous of gain."[2] He also noticed there a statue of *Pi-sha-men* (*Vaiśravaṇa*?) *deva* who has always protected this Saṅghārāma. To the north of the Saṅghārāma there was a very huge stupa of 200 feet in height, covered with a plaster, hard as the diamond and ornamented with a variety of precious substances. This stūpa, as Hiuen-tsiang records, contained the sacred body relic of the Buddha.[1] The temples which the stūpas of Nava-Vihāra rose it to a great place of piety and veneration and people took in high esteem.

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[1] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, pp. 44-45; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-49; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang*, p.-108.

[2] *Ibid.*

Nava-Vihāra, a Centre of Advance Learning of Pariyatti

Nava-Vihāra was not only a sacred place of veneration for a number of sacred relics of Buddha preserved therein but it also developed as a great centre for advance study of the Later Tharavāda or Hīnayāna school of Buddhism. It had become renowned because of a number of monk-scholars dwelling there who were the composer of different *Śāstras* or religious texts. Hiuen-tsiang writes, "The masters of Buddhism who dwelt the north of the Snowy Mountains, and are the authors of the *Śāstras*, occupy this convent only and continue their estimable labours in it."[2] This Saṅghārāma, as a great centre of advance studies of Hīnayāna, specialized in the Abhidharmic group of study. The courses of study there included the *Three Piṭakas* with its nine *Aṅgas* (Navanga).[3] In the Life of Hiuen-tsiang it is recorded that a great priest of the kingdom of Tabak, named Prañjākara[4] who had studied the Three Piṭakas belonging to the Little Vehicle had come to Balkh for worship, hearing many sacred traces of religion there and had stayed at Nava-Vihāra. He was excellent in intelligence and had mastered the Four Āgamas, Abhidharma of Little Vehicle, Kośa of Kātyāyana, Satapadābhidharma and many others. Nava-Vihāra was also a great centre for the studies in the Vibhasasastra of the Sarvāstivādins. Hiuen-tsiang stayed there for about a month with a view to study this text with the learned monks dwelling there, probably with Prañjākara. He mentions the names of two other monks who were also very learned and intelligent. They are: Dharmapriya *(Ta-mo-pi-li)* and Dharmakara *(Ta-mo-ki-li)*. Because of their deep knowledge of the Tripiṭaka they were exceedingly honoured by

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1. *Ibid.*
2. Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-44; Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-109.
3. The *Nine Aṅgas* are : *Sutta, Geyya, Veyyākarana, Gāthā, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Jātaka, Abbhutadhamma and Vedalla.*
4. Prañjākara is probably the same person, also called Prañjākara-gupta, who is credited with the authorship of the *Pramāṇavartika-bhāsya*. Rahula Sankrityayana observes that he was *praprasiṣya* of Dharmakirti (A.D. 600) and may be placed in about A.D. 700. See : *Pramāṇavartika-bhāsya* or *Vārtikalaṅkāra*, deciphered and edited by Tripitakachary Rahula Sankrityayana, publish by K.P. Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna (1953), Introduction, p.-VIII; Also Cf. Beal : *Records.......*, p.-44; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, pp. 50-51.

others.[1] Hiuen-tsiang found this vihāra as a great centre of learning where higher studies of scriptures and Śāstras were carried. According to his information, the Nava-Vihāra was the 'abode' of only those learned monks who had at least composed some Śāstras, while others were not allowed to reside there. Probably, no Buddhist monastery of this high academic standard and stature existed anywhere in the Buddhist World at that time, not even Nalanda Mahāvihāra, which of course was a renowned place in those days but was not exclusively meant for scholars alone, other ordinary monks, desirous to study were also permitted to stay there. But the Nava-Vihāra of Balkh was of a different standard, perhaps the only one institution where only highly learned monks who had already composed some Śāstra in Buddhism could be admitted. Certainly it was the 'pride' of Afghanistan.

Monk-scholars from China and probably from other countries of the Buddhist world also used to come to this vihara for their higher learning under the guidance of great learned scholars dwelling there. I-tsing, another Chinese monk-traveller probably visited this vihāra in between 700-712 A.D. In his translation of the *Kau-fu-kao-sang-chuan* (in two parts) fifty two monks are said to have visited India and other neighbouring countries. The Translation refers to a Chinese monk-scholar, Cittavarma by name, who stayed at this vihāra. He is said to have come to Balkh accompanying the envoy and stayed at this monastery where he got his Ordination *(Upasampada)* as a monk and then got the monastic name 'Cittavarma.' I-tsing also speaks in high sounding terms about the high standard of studies pursued there by the monk-scholars dwelling in this vihāra, all engaged in Hīnayāna studies. Cittavarma being interested in higher studies chose to stay in this vihāra for some time. He was himself a scholar but wanted to learn Sanskrit which he did not know. Sanskrit was understood and taught at this monastery and so Cittavarma studied Sanskrit for some time but left for China without mastering it.[2]

Another Vihāra, A Centre for Paṭipatti (Practical Training)

As Nava-Vihāra in Balkha was renowned for higher studies of the scriptures and Śāstras (i.e. *Pariyatti*) so also there was another vihāra to the south-west, not very far from the Nava-Vihāra, which had developed as a great centre for practical training of Buddhism, i.e. *Paṭipatti*. It was a unique centre of its kind, exclusively meant for meditational and spiritual training and practices, not any other centre known to us. It was the 'abode' of only those monks who had acquired proficiency in Buddhist spirituality and higher practices in meditation. Hiuen-tsiang speaks in high praise-words about the great saints dwelling there and also about their spiritual characters and achievements. It was reputed for *Patipatti* and so, the Chinese monk, who himself was of saintly demeanour, paid a visit to this place. He informs, "It was an 'old' vihāra where a number of monks are dwelling and all are engaged in practising *Dhyāna-Bhāvanā* or meditation and are assiduous to realize the 'Truth' of the world". He found them conspicuously intelligent who hailed from distant quarters. Among them many had attained great spiritual attainments, and some had achieved supernatural powers also. In this vihāra above 100 monks, who were 'days and night' assiduous at their practices and 'one could not tell which was a common monk and which was an Arhat'. Many of them had attained one of the 'four stages'[1] (viz. Sotāpanna, Sakadagāmī, Anāgami and Arhat, also called Mahāggata Bhūmīs). Hiuen-tsiang also relates an interesting tradition of this vihāra. He informs that those monk-saints who had attained Arhatship and who, when about to die, made a public exhibition of their miraculous powers, were honoured by building stūpas by the people after Nirvāṇa. Hiuen-tsiang witnessed some hundreds of such stūpas erected in the memory of such Arhat-saints in the courtyard of the vihāra. He also informs that those saints who, although Arhats, had died without exhibiting spiritual miracles, had no such memorials and their number is about 1000.[2]

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[1] Beal, S. : *Life of Hieun-tsiang*, p.51.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Introduction, pp. XXXII-XXXIII.

This monastery of Balkh was probably established at some secluded place fit for spiritual practices and meditation, somewhere outside the town. Being an 'old vihāra', its compound was full of commemorative stūpas of Arhat Saints who had dwelt there in the past. By the time of Hiuen-tsiang it had gained great popularity as a centre for higher practical training in Buddhism. We have no knowledge of any other centre like this which ever existed exclusively for Vipassanā or 'Self-Meditation' in any part of the Buddhist World. Probably, this centre took a lead to inspire other monastic establishments in Afghanistan for constructing the meditational caves, so abundant throughout the country, particularly at Bamiyan, Dauranta, Baswal and other places. At Kapiśa also such caves were made for the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p.-46; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-50; Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, pp. 109-111.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-46; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-50, Watters, T. : *On the Travels of Yuan Chwang*, p.-109.

Chinese Prince Hostages by Kaniṣka for their meditational practices. Probably this vihāra stood as the foremost in imparting the practical or *Paṭipatti* training of Buddhism. This vihāra flourished for centuries in Afghanistan and scholars and seekers and practitioners, both monks and devout laymen, used to flock there. For higher studies in the scriptures and Śāstras they joined the Nava-Vihāra and for meditational and spiritual practices, came to the other Saṅghārāma of Balkh.

Western Turkic Khans and Balkh

The Turkic Khans, usually known as the Western Turkas were successful in over-running the Hephthalites or Hūṇas by joining hands with the Sassanians and ruled over Balkh area in the middle of 6th century A.D. The first Trukic Khan had his capital at Quanduz, and Balkh was then considered as his 'little capital', which he snatched away from the last Hephthalite king, who ruled over his northern kingdom from here. It is said that the Haphthalite king was noted for his unkind behaviour and savage nature. He is said to have ruthlessly destroyed some Buddhist temples and stūpas.[1] This may have been possible and some of the temples or other shrines or monasteries which opposed the Hūṇas' rule or their religious beliefs might have suffered. But since he was not a persecutor of Buddhism, many monastic centres flourished as before. We have seen above that in 7th century A.D. Balkh had gained a great name and fame for its many sacred objects preserved in the Nava-Vihāra and other sacred places in the town and also for higher studies and training in Buddhism. Many great teachers and saints of Hīnayāna school of Buddhism occupied the monasteries of Balkh. Hiuen-tsiang himself met with many eminent monk-scholars, well-versed in different Śāstras and also many saints engaged in higher spiritual practices. Perhaps the effect of the Hūṇas' unfavorable attitude was insignificant and Buddhism in Balkh flourished as before.

The Arabs occupied Persia in 642 A.D. and advanced their sway towards the east. They attacked Balkh for the first time in 645 A.D. but could not have their control over it though the grandeur and wealth of the city always attracted them. The city however impressed them so much that the Arab historians called it 'Oumm-ul-belad' i.e. 'Mother of cities'. It was only in 653 A.D. when the Arab Commander, al-Ahnaf raided the town again and compelled to pay tributes. But he too could not establish his control over Balkh. As a matter of fact the area was brought under Arab's control only after it was reconquered by Muawiya

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1. Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, Kabul (1967), p.-74.

in 663 A.D.. The Arabs plundered the town and killed the people indiscriminately. It is said that they raided the famous Buddhist shrine of Nava-Vihāra, which the Arab historians call 'Nava-Bahār'[1] and describe it as one of the magnificent places which 'comprised a range of 360 cells around the high stupas'.[2] They plundered the gems and jewels that were studded on many images and stūpas and took away the wealth accumulated in the vihāra but probably did no considerable harm to other monastic buildings or to the monks residing there. These Arab attacks left little effect on the normal ecclesiastical life in the monasteries or the laymen outside. Buddhism continued to flourish with their monasteries as the centres of Buddhist learning and training. Scholars, monks and pilgrims used to come to this place from different Buddhist countries like China, India and Korea. I-tsing, another Chinese monk-traveller who visited India in 693-94 A.D., about whom we have referred to earlier, presents the accounts of fifty six Buddhist monks who visited India and the neighbouring countries from China and bordering districts during the later half of the seventh century A.D.[3] He mentions one Cittavarma. An interesting story about his declining to eat meat is related by I-tsing who mentions, "Having received the precepts, he declined to eat 'three pure things. (i.e. meat pure by three ways),[4] on which the master of the convent said, "Tathāgata, our Great Master, permitted five things' (as food),[5] why do you object them?" He then answered, "All the books of Great Vehicle forbid them; this is what I formerly practised; I cannot now bring myself to change." The Superior answered , "I have established a practice here in agreement with the three sacred collections (Tripiṭakas), and you follow your own interpretation, which is contrary to mine. I cannot permit this difference of opinion; I cease to be your master." Cittavarma was thus reluctantly obliged to yield."[6] He stayed at Nava-Vihāra for some time and studied and having learned little Sanskrit returned China,[7] about which we have discussed above.

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[1] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Lieden & London (1960) Vol.- , p.-1001.
[2] *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, (1966), Vol.-II, p.-488.
[3] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, Introduction, p.-XXVI.
[4] *Tikoṭiparisuddha maṃsa-maccha*-meat or fish pure by 'three ways' - Cf. Upasak, C.S. : *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, p.-117.
[5] Food or *Bhojanīya* of monks included five things, namely, *Odana* (rice), *Sattu* (Powdered parched grain), *Kummāsa* (mixed rice & pulse), *Maṃsa* (meat) and *Maccha* (fish). Cf. *Ibid.*, p.-176.
[6] Beal, S. : *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, Introduction, pp. XXXII - XXXIII.
[7] *Ibid.*; Introduction, p.-XXXIII; also Cf. Barua D.K. : *Buddhist Art of Central Asia*, Calcutta (1983), pp. 10-11.

By the above I-tsing's account it is evident that Buddhism flourished in Balkh and perhaps Arabs' rule caused no hindrance in its progress. The Later Theravāda Buddhism or Hīnayāna school was studied and taught at Nava-Vihāra as before. Scholars used to come to Balkh for their higher studies and training or for learning Sanskrit which was taught there.

The Arabs' control over Balkh could not last long as it soon came under the rule of a local prince, called Nazak Tarkhan probably a Turk, who was a zealous Buddhist and ruled over Balkh in early 8th century A.D. (in 708/9 A.D.). He is said to have not only reprimanded the Chief-priest of Nava-Vihāra but beheaded him for embracing Islam.[1] It appears that by the Arab's rule there, Islam also reached but its spread was sporadic and slow and could wield no desirable influence. Religion continued to flourish unhampered despite political changes or religious persuasions and the Buddhist Community followed Buddhism with devotion and faith as before.

Destruction

The Arab authors have left interesting accounts of the destruction of Nava-Vihara (Nava-Bahara as they call it), and call its chief-priest, 'Baramik'. They describe the Nava-Vihāra as a very wealthy monastery and the lands attached to the Temple covered 1500 sq. kms.. The management of the lands was done by 'Baramik', according to Arab writers, 'a name traditionally borne by the ancestry of a family, and it was not a proper name, but a word designating the office in hereditary of high priest of the temple of Nawbahar (Nava-Vihāra) near Balkh'.[2] It is interesting to note that the name Baramik obviously appears to be a derivative of the term *Vara-Ārāmika,* meaning the 'Chief of the Attendants of an Ārāma' or Buddhist monastery. An *ārāmika* is an attendant of an Ārāma or Saṅghārāma who looks after the vihāra, its property etc. as appointed by the Saṅgha.[3] The Nava-Vihāra possessed a good landed property amounting to hundreds of sq. kms. and so, numerous *aramikas* were appointed to look after the landed property of this important monastery of Balkh. The Chief of the Ārāmikas was called 'Vara-Ārāmika.' The Arab writers have rightly designated him as 'Baramik', although they mistook him as 'high priest', probably because they were not familiar with the Buddhist monastic management. Their information was based on

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1. Thakur, Upendra : *The Hūṇas in India,* Varanasi (1967), p.-260.
2. *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Leader & London (1960), Vol.0II, p.-1033.
3. Cf. Upasak, C.S. : *D.E.B.M.T.*, pp. 31-32.

indirect sources and that also when the resident monks of the vihāra were either killed or forced to embrace Islam and monasteries had become desolate and deserted. Baramik was then the master of the whole monastic establishment, including landed property. Though the Nava-Vihāra was pillaged and plundered many a time by the Arabs, in the beginning, however it continued to be a place of veneration for the surviving Buddhist community. Several revolts were made against the Arab rule in Balkh. The city and its great Buddhist monastic establishments suffered considerably and much devastations and destructions were done by them. The vihāras were razed to the ground and their shrines were demolished and city turned into the heaps of ruins. The Arabs could bring this great town of Buddhist culture and religion under control only in 715 A.D. inspite of several stubborn resistances and rebellions by the people. The Arabs not only betook the riches, jewels and gems accumulated in the monasteries of Balkh but burnt to ashes those treasures which were enshrined in the form of manuscripts in the libraries of the monasteries. Perhaps it was the greatest cultural loss. Buddhist monks, the true upholders of Buddhism *(Dhammadharās)* were either put to sword or were forced to embrace Islam. The Buddhist community not only lost their sacred religious places but also became forlorn for want of their religious leaders, the Buddhist monks and was left to no way out but to adopt the new strange religion, the Islam. Probably Balkh was the first place in Afghanistan to lose its pristine glory, excellence and cultural heritage by the hands of Arabs and was set in ruins for the good.

What the Ruins of Balkh Speak?

The modern town of Balkh is not even the shadow of the grandeur of the ancient city which was once the 'pride' of Afghanistan, the 'Mother of cities'; culturally so sacred as to be called 'Little Rajagriha'. At present it lies in ruins. Only some of its monuments stand in mounds, some excavated while others still buried unnoticed. Only the ancient wall of the town, which once encircled it, stands partially. One or two stūpas in ruinous condition and some excavated monasteries are presently available there. Archaeological discoveries, though scanty, present its ancient glory and glamour.

Tapa-i-Rustam

Outside the modern town are the ruins of a huge mud stūpa, which local people call Tapa-i-Rustam (Tapa = Stūpa of Rustam). The remains of the stūpa show that it was built of dried clay and then faced with dried bricks. It is a circular mound, 60 ft. high and 200 ft. in diameter. The dome of the stūpa is about 100 ft. in diameter and 30 ft. high.[1] There are niches which probably once contained the images of the Buddha and other deities which once embellished it. Perhaps this was the great stupa which is mentioned by Hiuen-tsiang. It was then 200 ft. high and contained the relics of the Buddha and was decorated with various precious substances. In the beginning it was plastered from outside with hard substances which looked like diamond.[2] Nothing has been recovered from the stūpa; and some have made big holes in it probably in search of treasures.

Takhta-i-Rustam or Ruins of Nava-Vihāra(?)

To the east of this stūpa across the road lie the ruins of an ancient monastery. It is brick built and covers an extensive area. The wedge-shaped outlines of the ruins suggest that it was a great monastery, probably the Nava-Vihāra which stood outside the town as described by Hiuen-tsiang and also known from other Chinese sources.[3] It was the most important vihāra and contained several relics of the Buddha, and also was famous for higher studies. But there has been so much plundering of this vihāra after the disappearance of Buddhism that nothing could be traced in the ruins. Only the vaulted rooms, corridors, foundations of living cells of the monks are visible.

Bala Hissar (High Fort) or Kala-i-Hinduwan

The most impressive monument inside the town is the ruined rampart of Bala Hissar or the High Fort. French Archaeologists have made several excavations at this ancient fort since 1924-25 A.D. but nothing has been found of Buddhist interest. It was the site of a citadel and probably the earliest local habitation of the people in Balkh city. Some antiquities, particularly the ceramic objects, found from the lowest portion of Bala-Hissar are pre-Islamic and some believe them to be of pre-Kusāna or Graeco-Bactrian periods.[4]

The High Walls of Balkh

During the rule of Kuṣānas, particularly during Kaniṣka's time, the town expanded to the south and east and was fortified by a high rampart with many towers. The walls however show three distinct periods of super-imposed buildings.[1] The walls are made of mud or sun-dried bricks, about 12 to 15 ft. thick at the base and some 20 ft. high rising directly from the plain without any rampart, and furnished with the half circular towers at intervals.[2] The Buddhist monuments are found just outside these walls across the main high road.

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[1] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road to Balkh*, p.-96.

[2] Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, p.-46; *Life of Hiuen-tsiang*, p.-50; Watters T. : *On the Travels of Yuan-Chwang*, p.-109.

[3] *Ibid.*, same as above.

[4] Dupree, N.H. : *The Road of Balkh*, p.-95.

Aq Kupruk (or A Solitary Bridge)

A village at a distance of 43 miles south from Balkh called Aq Kupruk, meaning 'Solitary Bridge', is situated on the right bank of the Band-i-Amir. Some antiquities of Buddhist interest have been recovered from here. Several large jars, variety of painted wares, an extensive burial area containing numerous skeletons, and many such antiquities have been found from here after excavation. A series of fragmented, defaced Buddhist paintings in an upper chamber of a cave have also been found from here. These antiquities are dated to 5th or 6th century A.D.[3]

Near the main village of Aq Kupruk there is a hamlet called Toraghar. The very name of this small village as Toraghar suggests it to be a derivative of the ancient term *Theraghara*, meaning 'House of Thera or Elder'. The village appears to have retained its ancient name for being located at the site of a monastery, exactly as Begram or Vihāragrama, of other places in Afghanistan. This village got its name because of some monastery belonging to an important elderly monk (a Thera) was established near it.

Some Unexplored Buddhist Places

Balkh being one of the most important Buddhist places in Afghanistan which flourished for several centuries, probably from the life-time of the Buddha, should have had numerous Buddhist monuments in and around this area. But, presently we find only few in ruins. Probably some of the villages near this town are also the places of Buddhist community where vihāras and temples and stūpas were once erected there. It is interesting to find some villages which still retain their ancient names and if explorations are made, Buddhist antiquities and monuments may come to light. We are giving accounts of some of them which may be of some interest to scholars and archaeologists.

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1. See : M.Le Berre and D. Schlumberger : *Observations Sur less Ramparts de Bactria* in *M.D.A.F.A.*, Vol.-XIX, Paris (1964), pp. 67-89.
2. Adamec, L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-4, p.-110.
3. Allchin, F.R. & Hammond, N. : *Archaeology of Afghanistan*, p.-299, Mizuno, S. : *Haibak and Kashmir Smast*, p.-106.

(1) Saṅgacharak

As the name Saṅgacarak suggests, its ancient name might have been Saṅgha-cakra, meaning an area (Cakra) of land belonging to Sangha. We know that the Nava-Vihāra possessed a large landed property, some 1500 sq. kms. as reported by the Arab writers. It is situated in the fertile basin of the Balkh river, west of the present town.[1] It is very likely that some antiquities may be found from this place if explored.

(2) Baharak

It is a village in the Tukzar sub-division of Saṅgacharak district in Balkh region.[2] Probably since it was situated in the suburb of Balkh, it was called Bāharak or Bāharika. We know, Nalanda is described as *'Bāharika'* of Rājagṛiha in Pali literatures. Probably this village also got a similar name. It should be an ancient village of the area and may yield some antiquities when proper exploration is made.

(3) Ak Tapa

When we proceed from Balkh to Mazar-i-Sharif by road, at a distance of about 11 miles the village now called Ak Tapa[3], literarily meaning 'solitary stūpa' stands. It is a common look to find a number of stūpas standing on both the sides of the road leading to Mazar-i-Sharif. Many of them are visible from a distance. The present village is situated near a solitary stūpa, hence this name.

Another village of identical name is also situated at about 13 miles west of Balkh.[4] It is likely that if proper investigations are made, these villages may yield Buddhist antiquities and monuments.

(4) Shulghar

To the east of Sangcharak, near Balkh, stands a village presently called Shulghar, also known as Buinkara. Shulghara is obviously a derivative of the word *'Śilaghara'*, indicating a temple or a monastery. The term *Śila* means, 'morality'. *Pañcasila* is known as, "Five Moral Precepts', prescribed for the Buddhist lay devotees. There is a fort at this place situated on the right bank of the river. The

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1. Adamec, L.W. : *Historical & Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, Vol.-4, Mazar-i-Sharif, pp. 494-502.
2. *Ibid., Mazar-i-sharif*, p.-53.
3. *Ibid.*, p.-141. Cf. 'Girieka', a place from where the first hill of Rajagriha begins; See : Mitra, Debala : *Buddhist Monuments of India* , Calcutta (1971), p.-73; also Beal, S. : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Bk.-IX, p.-148.
4. Adamec L.W. : *Op. cit.*, Vol.-IV, p.-53.

village appears to have some ancient monuments, certainly belonging to Buddhists. It got another name 'Buinkara' only after a branch of Uzbek clan which lived there and is said to mean 'Black neck', obviously a later name, nothing to do with Buddhism.

There are several other such villages and ancient sites near Balkh which are directly connected with Buddhist history and culture. We can only hope that if and when a proper investigation of the area is made, we will definitely get new materials of immense value for reconstructing the history of Buddhism in Balkh, the 'pride' of Afghanistan.

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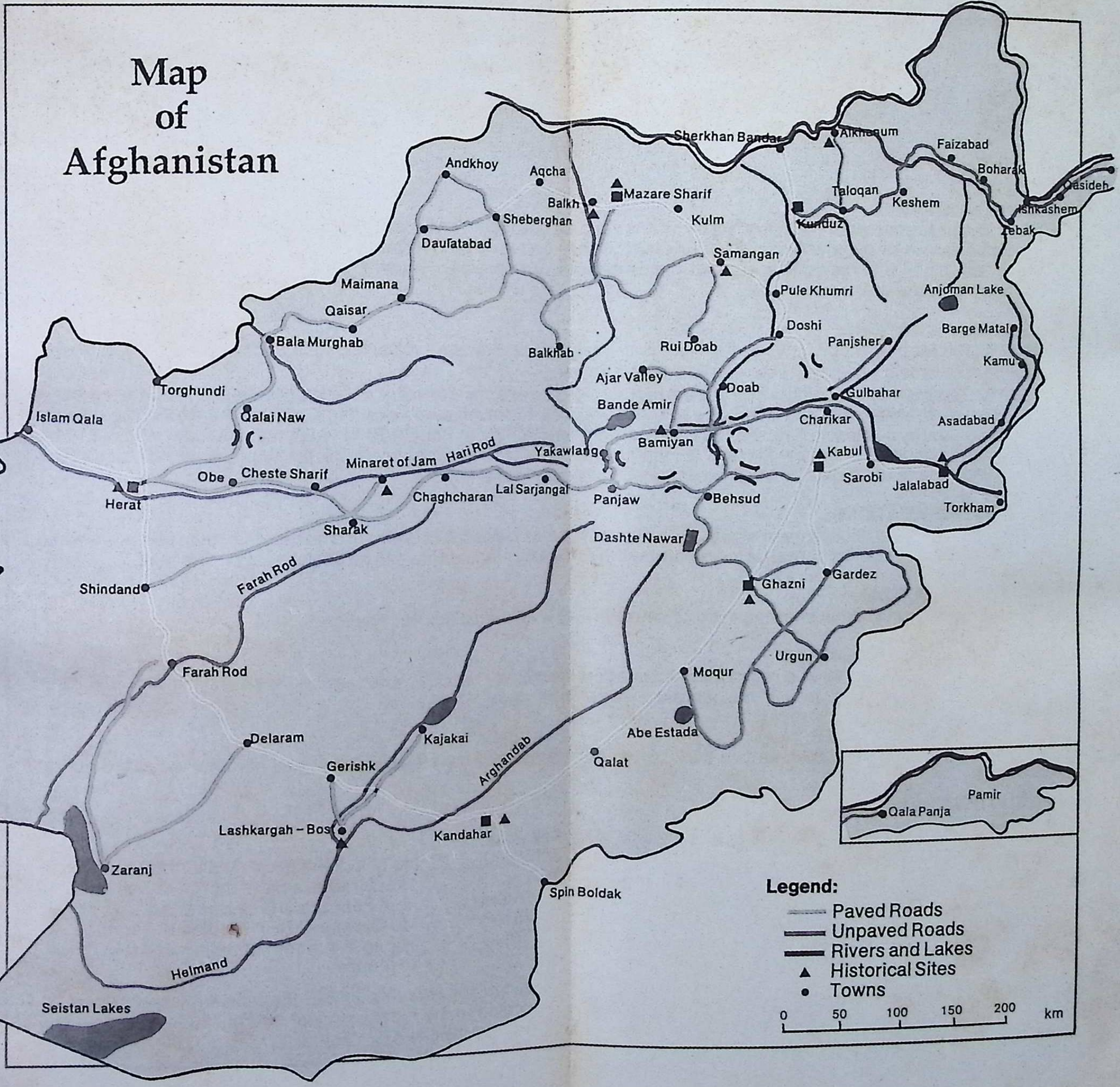
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Sheberghan
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Taloqan
Keshem
Ishkashem
Kunduz
Zebak
Daulatabad
Samangan
Maimana
Pule Khumri
Anjoman Lake
Qaisar
Doshi
Panjsher
Barge Matal
Bala Murghab
Balkhab
Rui Doab
Kamu
Torghundi
Ajar Valley
Doab
Gulbahar
Qalai Naw
Bande Amir
Charikar
Asadabad
Islam Qala
Yakawlang
Bamiyan
Kabul
Minaret of Jam
Hari Rod
Obe
Cheste Sharif
Lal Sarjangal
Sarobi
Jalalabad
Herat
Chaghcharan
Panjaw
Behsud
Torkham
Sharak
Dashte Nawar
Farah Rod
Shindand
Ghazni
Gardez
Urgun
Farah Rod
Moqur
Abe Estada
Delaram
Kajakai
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Gerishk
Arghandab
Lashkargah – Bost
Kandahar
Zaranj
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Helmand
Seistan Lakes
Pamir
Qala Panja
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Unpaved Roads
Rivers and Lakes
▲ Historical Sites
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